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# CHINA AND THE CHINESE.

## A TEXT-BOOK

· COMPRISING

THE RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES  
THE LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY  
OF CHINA.

ARRANGED FOR

Two Courses of Study.

BY

JOHN FRYER, LL.D.,

*Professor of Oriental Languages and Literature,  
University of California.*

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SHANGHAI:

PRINTED BY KELLY & WALSH, LIMITED, NANKING ROAD.

1897



*Y. J. Lin*

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# CHINA AND THE CHINESE.

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## Course the First.

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### THE PHILOSOPHIES AND RELIGIONS OF CHINA.

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#### Part I.

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#### INTRODUCTION.

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##### 1. THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF THIS COURSE.

In this first course we shall consider the chief features of the Philosophies and Religions which have been founded or have existed in China from the earliest ages up to the present time. We shall dwell principally upon the Confucian and Taoist philosophers, and their systems of philosophy, because both had their origin in China, and have found but little acceptance elsewhere except in her dependencies and in Japan. We shall treat Buddhism at some length also, because although an exotic system it has exercised an immense influence over China. The Mohammedan and Jewish religions as found in China will have their full share of notice. An account of the folk-lore, the many peculiar beliefs and the different secret societies in China naturally belongs to this subject, and will doubtless be found interesting and useful. Lastly, the various forms in which Christianity has been presented to China, *viz.* the Nestorian, the Roman Catholic, the Greek and the Protestant Churches, will be duly considered in their history, operations and results. It will be necessary sometimes to enter rather largely into history, biography and other allied subjects to assist in presenting a more comprehensive view

of some portions of this course, the intention of which is to impart useful knowledge rather than to afford intellectual amusement. While every effort will be made to render it interesting, the main object will be to make it instructive and useful, so that the information thus attained may throw light on other studies, and prove beneficial in the after life of every student.

## 2. THE GROWING INTEREST AND IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION RESPECTING CHINA.

**Chinese and Western nations gradually approaching.**—Notwithstanding the enormous lapse of time during which the Chinese people have covered a large portion of the surface of the earth, and have constituted a great percentage of the human race, we have hitherto taken but a scanty interest in their affairs. The chief reason for this is doubtless because both the people and their literature have been to such a large extent inaccessible to us. A new era has now begun to dawn. After the many long centuries of isolation, during which China has been separated almost as far as possible from us, in thought and sentiment, there begins to be evinced a tendency towards mutual approach. On the one hand the people of this enormous Empire, founded and preserved by the wisdom of their forefathers, are now finding it necessary to infuse into their political, civil, military and industrial affairs whatever of value they can discover in Western civilization. We, on the other hand, are equally interested in finding a new and vast field where our manufactures and our technical knowledge may be turned to the best and most profitable account. Again, in many branches of science, and especially in sociology and ethnology, our conclusions have heretofore been drawn from facts observed among a little more than one-half of the people of the globe. Is it not therefore reasonable to predict that when the other half becomes better known, and more data are at our disposal, our conclusions will have to be considerably modified?

**Advantages of a better understanding of each other.**—There is already so much of common interest between the nations of the East and West that each succeeding year must find them approaching nearer and nearer to each other. A mutual knowledge of each other's systems of thought and rules of life are already felt to be highly desirable; but ere very long they will come to be regarded as indispensable. While China on the one hand is beginning to ask for schools and educational facilities for her millions of literary and industrious subjects, where the knowledge of Western arts, sciences, and manufactures can readily be

acquired, we on the other hand have need in our colleges for facilities to carry on a careful study of all that concerns the inner and outer life of this most ancient and wonderful people. We want to know upon what first principles they attempt to explain the facts and events in the world around them. We want to understand in all their practical bearings what they have believed and still believe to be of paramount importance for the rule of individual and national conduct and the permanent preservation of their national existence. Hence in the curriculum of every establishment that professes to give a liberal education there should now be the means for studying among other things the philosophies and religions of China. Students will soon find that they can better afford to be ignorant of the minute details of the affairs of Greece and Rome of 2,000 years ago, which have no connection with our present daily life and prospects, than they can afford to be ignorant of Chinese matters, which extending in an unbroken line from a most distant past reach right up to the living present, and have only just begun to come into general notice, or to assume international importance.

**Past achievements of China.**—Taking another point of view, we have only to look at the magnitude of the problem the Chinese race has effectively solved, to see how they are entitled to our careful consideration, if not to our admiration. From comparative savagery they have risen by their own inherent force of character, step by step, through various stages of civilization till, 500 years ago, they were undoubtedly one of the most civilized nations on earth. Since that time Europeans by their rapid advances in science and in the useful and ornamental arts have so far surpassed them that the Chinese appear to be left far behind. But we must remember that their civilization developed under quite a different form from our own, and the dissimilarity is perhaps as wide as can possibly exist between two races of beings having the same common nature and wants. Yet a people among whom inventions which are esteemed the pride of modern Europe—the compass, gunpowder and printing—were known and practised many centuries earlier—who have gone on increasing in numbers till they probably amount to more than 400 millions, united in one system of manners, letters, and polity—who already practice upon a vast scale the most necessary of the industrial arts—who are noted for the frugality and ingenuity by which they can continue to live comfortably and happily where other races would starve—such a nation, when once it is fairly started in the direction of progress, must indeed occupy a conspicuous place in the future history of mankind,

**A missing link.**—In the same way therefore that the many Chinese who want to succeed in Western affairs are beginning to make our philosophies and religions a prominent feature of their study, so those among ourselves who wish to be first on the field ready to reap the best advantages and realize the highest benefits which the opening up of China will place in their power, must spare no pains to become fully conversant with all that China holds most sacred on these two important topics. We must remember that however lightly we may regard them the Chinese see a vast fund of meaning in the utterances of their philosophers, whom they look up to with the deepest reverence, and that they feel a real power in their different forms of religion, which have borne so large a part in influencing the lives of themselves and their ancestors for untold generations. Not only can we not afford to ignore these studies, but we shall find in them one of the missing links in the chain which is to draw the East and West into closer connection, and expand their mutual advantages. The sooner therefore that this link can be supplied and adjusted in its proper place the better.

### 3. THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF CHINA.

**Necessity for a knowledge of Chinese ancient history.**—In order rightly to understand the philosophies and religions of China in all their bearings a general outline of her ancient history, embracing the moral, social and political progress of the country, will be found desirable at the very outset. This subject is generally either almost ignored or only very vaguely represented in our universal histories, and hence requires a brief and special method of treatment in the introduction to the present course. Such a sketch as we propose to give is as necessary for our purpose as is a historical account of the Jews for the proper understanding of Christianity and the New Testament. Unfortunately, however, the origin and early history of the Chinese, like those of most other ancient countries, can never be fully ascertained. We should like to know for certain the time, the manner, and the route by which the progenitors of the Chinese came to the land they have since occupied so many thousands of years. We should like a full account of their leader, his long line of ancestors, the traditional or self-taught knowledge he possessed, the rise and progress of learning in every department, the growth of the various relationships, whether civil, social or moral, the invention of writing and writing materials, the instruments used in agriculture and the vast varieties of handicrafts. We should like to know all about the earliest domestic and state policy, the first establishment of

schools and the spread of education. For these and a hundred other interesting branches of historical details we would gladly look down the vista of past ages to discover their original germs and earlier forms of development, tracing each stage of progress right up to the present time.

**Its uncertain character.**—Unhappily trustworthy materials for such an investigation as we have described are very few and far between, much of the earliest portions of the history being blended with fable. Monuments, testimonies and relics of such a reliable character that they may be woven into the web of history are scarcely to be found. There is therefore only the more reason why such as we find bearing the stamp of authority should be collected and combined so as to present a faithful exhibition of China in her earlier condition. Such an account would prove of great value and interest. It would, of course, be easy to compile a fanciful and complete history of the nation as some Chinese historians attempt to do, going back into pre-historic eras by gigantic steps of tens of thousands of years each; but all we can promise in these introductory remarks are brief and miscellaneous notes, founded on the statements generally received by Chinese scholars.

**Origin of the Chinese race.**—At some very remote period, so remote that no approximate date can be given for it, the original Chinese race must have separated themselves from the main portion of the great human family by which Central, or, as some good scholars believe, Western Asia was then occupied, and moving eastward descended into the fertile plains north of the Yellow River. An examination of the Chinese language seems to show that the date of this separation must have been long before the Hebrew, Sanscrit and other allied languages had been developed, for it has preserved the primary monosyllabic sounds and the ideographic characters which distinguish the very earliest races of the world. Some authorities trace many points of resemblance between the Chinese and the Ancient Babylonians, while other writers have tried to show that the original Chinese were an Egyptian colony, because in several instances there seems to exist an identity between several of the primitive Chinese characters and the Egyptian hieroglyphics. Though not at all impossible, yet in the absence of any positive proof these and many other plausible theories must remain undecided for the present.

**How they entered China.**—We may here ask how the Chinese probably entered China? By reference to the map it will be seen that China proper is enclosed between the sea on the East and South, and vast ranges of mountains on the West and North. From these main ranges secondary ones project in various directions, and these

again send out innumerable spurs of different altitudes, spreading over the great part of the interior, so that China, far from being a vast plain, as is commonly supposed, is in reality a very mountainous country, and is inaccessible by land except on two sides; and these only through difficult mountain passes; while on the other two sides is the sea. The easiest route is from the North-west, and doubtless this is the direction from which they entered.

**Their first settlement.**—We notice again two great rivers intersecting China and flowing in the same easterly direction. The Hwang-ho or Yellow River is the northernmost, about 2,600 miles long; and the Yang-tsz-kiang is the southernmost, about 3,300 miles, both rising in the mountains of Thibet. It was doubtless the basin of the Yellow River that formed the cradle of the Chinese as a nation. They reached here from the North-west probably in search of a milder climate and more fruitful soil than those of the home they had relinquished on the other side of the mountains. The Yellow River bounds two sides of the province of Shansi, within which the first settlement was probably made. This province with the two neighbouring provinces of Shensi and Honan are distinguished for deep rich loamy soil technically known as loess. The surrounding mountains are rich in minerals and the hill-sides are covered in some parts with wild mulberry trees, the leaves of which feed wild silkworms in enormous numbers.

**Their condition.**—These early representatives of the Chinese race are said to have been little better than savages, subsisting solely on the natural fruits of the earth and on the raw flesh of animals killed in the chase, the skins of which formed their only clothing. They were apparently strangers to most of the arts, and to every idea which could raise the man much above the level of the brute. Their history naturally pre-supposes all this, because it commences by showing how the arts and sciences gradually appeared among them, being invented by their leaders or rulers.

**Their great antiquity.**—For such a nomadic tribe as the Chinese originally were to settle down into regular habits of pastoral or agricultural life, and to organize themselves into a political society of a comparatively high order, requires a long period of years. As one generation succeeds another it adds but very little to the previous stock of knowledge. Necessity is the mother of invention, but she requires time to do her work. Yet when we take up the very earliest history that possesses any claim to credibility we find the most sound and complete system of social and political organization clearly described. We must



grant then that a long period must have elapsed before this state of things was brought about ; and of this period we have no reliable record ; but it was of course nothing like the millions of years which some Chinese historians, with more patriotic pride than discretion, venture to claim.

**Aborigines.**—It must not be supposed, however, that these early Chinese settlers found the country unpeopled. They had to contend with the aboriginal inhabitants who were in a lower state of civilization than themselves. Remnants of these wild tribes still maintain an existence in various parts of the Empire in a state of semi-independence, and are generally known as the Miao-tsz or by other names as the Lolos, Linas, etc. These, being more or less scattered and disconnected, and not having any settled form of government, have never been able to cope with the growing power of the Chinese race, although they still hold some of their mountain fastnesses and are very numerous in some provinces. At different troublous times in Chinese history they have proved of great assistance to local rulers who have hired their services to put down opposing factions. Their dress, physiognomy, language and customs are entirely different from the Chinese. Many of them do not wear the queue, which is the sign of subjection to the Tartar Dynasty.

#### 4. DYNASTY OF THE "THREE AUGUST SOVEREIGNS."

**Chinese dynasties.**—It is usual to divide the rulers of China into 28 Dynasties, the present or Ch'ing Dynasty being the 28th. The five dynasties coming before the time of Confucius we shall now proceed to consider in their regular order. They commence with the fabulous, and gradually become more and more deserving of the name of historical till when we reach the Hsia Dynasty [B.C. 2204] we feel we are treading on solid ground.

The name of the "Three August Sovereigns" is applied to the First Dynasty because three of the Emperors, the Second, Third and Fourth, are considered to be of greater importance than the other.

**P'an-ku.**—The first Emperor, if so he may be called, was P'an-ku. He is the first man or Adam of Chinese history. His origin and description are most curious, and illustrate the Chinese vague notions of the creation of the material world. As explained by one writer : when the primeval Chaos was separated, the dual powers of heaven and earth were mingled and pent up into the *ovum mundi*, like the chicken in an egg. Their union produced P'an-ku who broke his shell and appeared on the scene in the form of an enormous man. His name, "P'an," means a basin,

referring to the egg-shell, and "ku" means solid or to secure, referring to his work of creation. This mythical person and his exploits are variously described by Chinese cosmogonists. One argues that Heaven being his father, and earth his mother, he was consequently named 天子 Tien-tsz, the Son of Heaven, which title the succeeding Emperors of China have retained until the present time. It was P'an-ku who with his chisel and mallet opened out and formed the earth, placing the continents and the oceans in their proper localities. When he died his body became part of the existing universe: his breath was transmitted into the winds and clouds; his voice into thunder; his left eye into the sun; his right into the moon; his four limbs into the four quarters of the globe; his five extremities into the five great mountains; his blood into rivers; his muscles and veins into the strata of the earth; his flesh into the soil; his hair and beard into the constellations; his skin and hairs into plants and trees; his teeth and bones into the metals; his marrow into pearls and precious stones; his perspiration into rain; and lastly the parasites upon him were transformed into the human species! Such was the the first Emperor of China, or the first "Son of Heaven!"

**T'ien-hwang.**—The Second was T'ien-hwang, or the "Celestial Sovereign," whose line of successors lasted 18,000 years, with only 13 rulers.

**Ti-hwang.**—The Third was Ti-hwang, or the "Terrestrial Sovereign," whose line of successors numbered 11, and existed during 18,000 years.

**Jên-hwang.**—The Fourth was Jên-hwang, in whose line were 9 successors, and whose duration extended over 45,600 years.

Among the most extraordinary inventions attributed to these three long dynasties, we are told by Chinese historians, with the greatest gravity, that eating, drinking and sleeping were introduced for the benefit of humanity!

**Yiu-ch'ao.**—Following the "August Emperors" came two who appear to have been real personages. The first was named Yiu-ch'ao or the "Nest-having." In his time the people who had hitherto lodged in caves or under the shade of trees were taught to make rude huts out of the branches of trees.

**Sui-jên.**—Next came Sui-jên, or the "fire-producer," in whose reign, reckoning by knotted cords, public markets and Divine worship were instituted, together with the use of fire for purposes of cookery. Some historians add a third monarch, named Yung-ching, or "service-completed." Here the purely mythological ends, and with the second

dynasty commences what is known as the “highest antiquity,” in which nothing actually impossible is narrated, every statement being perfectly reasonable, allowing of course for a certain amount of Oriental colouring.

5. THE DYNASTY OF THE FIVE EMPERORS.

**Fu-hsi.**—Fu-hsi, one of the favourite ministers of Sui-jên the “fire-producer,” was chosen by public acclamation to succeed him B.C. 2852. He is generally revered as the real founder of the regular form of government and civilization in China. He colonized the neighbouring districts as far as the Eastern Sea, but his energies were mostly exerted in promoting the useful arts, and creating the first elements of letters and science. He introduced the manufacture of iron, taught the rearing of cattle, the practice of music, and the inviolability of marriage.

**The Eight Kwa.**—His greatest work, in the estimation of the Chinese, was his invention of the earliest form of divination. He got the idea from the series of 8 triple lines which he observed on the back of a dragon, and which are named the 8 *kwa*. These lines are of two kinds, whole and broken, and are related to natural objects or qualities thus :—

heaven (male)	vapours	fire	thunder	wind	water	mountains	earth (female)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
— — — —	- - - -	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	- - - -
— — — —	— — — —	- - - -	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	- - - -	— — — —
— — — —	- - - -	— — — —	- - - -	— — — —	- - - -	— — — —	- - - -
horse, strong.	ox, plodding.	dragon, bright.	fowl, mobile.	pig, pene- trating.	pheasant, sinking.	dog, stationary.	goat, compliant.

This series of 8 triple lines was afterwards doubled or arranged in groups of two and two, forming 64 combinations of six lines each, all having special names and expressing definite ideas, thus :—

— — — —	- - - -	— — — —		— — — —
— — — —	— — — —	- - - -		— — — —
— — — —	— — — —	— — — —		— — — —
— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	etc. etc., to	— — — —
— — — —	— — — —	— — — —		— — — —
— — — —	— — — —	— — — —		— — — —

The key to the whole system is the arrangement of the long and short strokes, which thus reminds us of Morse’s dot and dash method of telegraphy. This shows “there is nothing new under the sun.” Between 4 and 5 thousand years ago this system was discovered, and the formation of the Chinese characters is said to have been more or less based upon it at the outset. These combinations, which have been applied to various useful purposes, are greatly venerated by the Chinese, who

suppose they possess spiritual and mysterious virtues. They are regarded as the first approach towards literature.

**Shên-nung.**—Fu-hsi was succeeded by Shên-nung, or the "Divine Husbandman" [B.C. 2737]. He introduced tillage, teaching the people to clear the ground and construct ploughs similar to the clumsy ones in use at the present day. He also established fairs for commercial purposes. He is noted for having studied the virtues and qualities of plants, so that medicine under his fostering care assumed the form of a science. One of his books, the "Herbal of the Emperor Shên-nung" is still the classic authority on *Materia Medica*, and is regarded as the model of pharmacological wisdom. All large drug-shops keep the medicines referred to in this book, and call them by their old names. It originally treated of 365 different drugs, in accordance with the days in the year. During the time that has elapsed since its first appearance, between 4000 and 5000 years ago, many new drugs have of course been added, and the original work greatly enlarged and expanded. In his old age Hsien-yuen, afterwards known as Hwang-ti, succeeded in driving him from his throne and usurping the dominion.

**Hwang-ti.**—Hwang-ti, or the Yellow Emperor [B.C. 2697], became one of the most illustrious of the ancient monarchs of China. Once firmly settled on the throne he turned his attention to the arts of peace, by inventing weights and measures, teaching the principles of arithmetic, using pieces of metal to serve as coins, constructing carriages, boats, and bridges, and building habitations of brick and stone. He also induced the ladies of his palace to spin and weave silk, and greatly improved the calendar. The invention of the sexagenary cycle by Nao the Great during this reign marks an important date in Chinese History. He arranged the 10 celestial stems and the 12 terrestrial branches in couples, odd to odd and even to even, making in all 60 combinations, each having a compound name. The Chinese chronology makes use of these cycles of 60 years with great advantage. The first cycle commenced in the 61st year of this Emperor, or 4,534 years ago [B.C. 2637]. From that date the cycles appear to have been carefully marked and recorded, so that the real history of China ought perhaps to be considered as commencing then. The present year (1897) is the 34th year of the 76th cycle. The same system is used in Japan and Corea. The next invention was a written language, which consisted of 540 characters or pictorial representations. Then this progressive Emperor improved the existing musical instruments, fixed the musical scale, and introduced the use of bows and arrows, swords and helmets, with military standards.

His authority was exerted with so much justice and strictness as to raise the Imperial power to an extraordinary degree and greatly improve the condition of the people. It is claimed by Taoist writers that he was the originator of the main doctrines of Taoism, afterwards expanded and framed into a system by Lao-tsz. He was succeeded by his son Chao-hao, afterwards by Chao-hao's nephew Chuen-hio, and subsequently by Chao-hao's grandson Ti-kao. These were all weak and useless as rulers. When Ti-kao had ruled nine years he was set aside and his younger brother, Yao, only 16 years of age, was appointed to the Sovereignty.

**Yao.**—Yao's reign is considered one of the most important in the Chinese annals. He made no great inventions as did his predecessors, but he gave his mind chiefly to the task of remedying the inundations of the large rivers by which the country was continually being desolated. Sometimes they rose to such a height that they are described as a flood or deluge overspreading the land. So anxious was Yao for the good of the nation that he put aside his own son, and selected for his successor Shun, on account of his many virtues. Shun was the son of an ill-tempered blind peasant, but by his good example effected a complete reform in his family. Especially was he noted for his filial piety, which moved heaven and earth to interfere in his behalf. A wild white elephant voluntarily came and drew his plough for him, while the birds of the air came and pulled up the weeds in his fields or removed the noxious insects that would destroy his crops. Yao came to visit Shun, and found him at work in his fields. He gave him his two daughters in marriage, associated him in the government, and after 28 years left him the sole occupant of the throne.

**Shun.**—Shun was noted for the judicious choice he made in his ministers, particularly of Yü, whom he made Governor-General. The great inundation known as "the deluge" was the most notable event in his reign, submerging the whole Empire as it then existed. The monarch is reported to have exclaimed:—"Oh! chief of the four mountains, "destructive in their overflow are the waters of the inundation. The "waters rise, they engulph the mountains, and insolently threaten the "sky; so that the people groan and murmur. Who will undertake to "control the unruly floods?"

Yü was deputed to undertake the task and also made Prime Minister. After 9 years of the most unremitting efforts he established a perfect system of embankments and drainage, for which he was rewarded by the gratitude of his sovereign and of the entire nation. He has ever since been regarded with tender reverence by a grateful posterity.

The children of Shun proving unworthy, Yü was appointed to succeed to the throne, which he did B.C. 2100, and thus commenced the Hsia Dynasty, so called from the territory of Hsia, of which Yü had become possessed.

**The Deluge.**—Some English writers have considered that Fu-hsi with his seven successors are merely modifications of the 8 antediluvian patriarchs referred to in the Bible, while Yü, who saved the people from the Deluge and drained the country after the flood, represents Noah. But all this is mere fancy—there being no connection with our Bible history whatever. The so-called “deluge” was evidently merely a local affair affecting but a small portion of what now forms the Chinese Empire. Its date, curiously enough, nearly agrees with that usually given to Noah.

## 6. SOURCES OF CHINESE ANCIENT HISTORY.

**Three sources.**—For the ancient history of China there are only three sources on which reliance is placed. The first of these is the *Shu-king*, edited by Confucius, and opening at the times of Yao and Shun. The second is the *Bamboo Annals*, commencing somewhat earlier with the reign of Hwang-ti or the “Yellow Emperor.” The third is the “*Historical Records*,” a compendium made by Sz-Ma-ch'ien in the 2nd Century B.C.

**Shu-king.**—The *Shu-king*, or book of Historical Documents, was compiled by Confucius from the earliest records to be found at his time. Every copy in the Empire was supposed to have been burned with the other classic books by order of the Emperor Tsin-shih in the 2nd century. Sixty years afterwards a new ruler of more enlightened views was anxious to repair the loss, and caused search to be made for the whole or parts of the book. An old blind man Fu-seng, who had committed a portion of the work to memory in his childhood, was able to recite it and his daughter to write it down. Afterward in rebuilding the house formerly inhabited by Confucius a larger portion was discovered agreeing with Fu-seng's portion. In these and other ways much of the original book has been recovered. The opening chapter commences at a period which is set down as 2356 B.C., and refers very graphically to the acts of the Emperor Yao. At this point the history of China proceeds on a more solid basis, the portions preceding the life of Yao being more or less unreliable.

**The Bamboo Annals.**—These form a large collection of ancient documents discovered in the year A.D. 279. The collection

embraced nearly 20 different works, which contained altogether between 70 and 80 chapters. They were written on slips of bamboo and were buried in the grave of King Siang of Wei, who died B.C. 295. They sustained various injuries and mutilations but were afterwards carefully collected and copied in modern characters. Though imperfect they are generally considered to be as reliable as the Shu-king, especially in the earlier portions of their history.

**Sz-Ma-ch'ien's Historical Records.** — Sz-Ma-ch'ien's Compendium, or "Historical Records," is the important and masterly production of an Official Recorder and Astronomer, who, after having incurred the displeasure of the Emperor Wu-ti for his too faithful records, and having suffered severe punishment, occupied the remainder of his life in compiling this book, which was the first attempt at a comprehensive survey of the History of China. It extends from the reign of Hwang-ti down to B.C. 104 and comprises all information obtainable from documents existing at that time.

## 7. THE CONDITION OF CHINA BEFORE THE HSIA DYNASTY.

**Moral.**—The general condition of China up to the Hsia Dynasty may in some part be gathered from the accounts already given of the different rulers. When the state of barbarism was passed the Chinese at once settled down to cultivate the arts of peace and to enjoy the benefits of sound government. The rate of progress appears to have been very rapid. This "golden age" of China was like the early innocence of childhood. There were but few laws, and those were so just that they were seldom broken. Penalties and punishments seem to have been unknown. It was not necessary to lock doors at night, and articles dropped on the road would never be picked up except by their owner. All was virtue, happiness and prosperity, the like of which has not since been known. It is a pity that more details of this period have not come down to us. No doubt the simplicity of their mode of life, chiefly spent in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, tended to produce peace and harmony with good morals everywhere. In many rural districts of China even at the present day the habits and manners of the country people are as simple and correct as they perhaps were in the "golden age." The vicinity of large cities and of a greedy officialdom, which exerts such a pernicious influence at the present day upon the morals of the people, were of course in those early times unknown.

**Social.**—A high degree of manufacturing ability had already been attained, especially in the weaving of silk and linen fabrics. They were able to apply the metals furnished abundantly by their mountains to useful and ornamental purposes, so that their copper currency has continued in uninterrupted succession from between 2000 and 3000 years B.C., of which date specimens still exist. In some of their domestic habits the early Chinese were far in advance of the inhabitants of neighbouring countries. They not only used chairs and tables, but they invented the method of raising food to their mouths by means of "chop sticks." We should remember that even as late as the reign of James I. of England the use of the fork in connection with the knife in eating was unknown, the knife and fingers serving all purposes. But of all the useful arts agriculture held the first place, and as the produce of the land formed the chief source of revenue, no efforts were spared to make it as productive as possible.

**Political.**—The system of levying taxes seems to have been arranged in accordance with the quality of the soil. At first the whole territory was divided into 9 districts, of which the Emperor was Supreme Ruler, and each district was managed by an officer whose title was "pastor" or "shepherd." These districts gradually became almost like independent States, and their so-called kings were more like feudal lords. By virtue of their superior civilization they were able to conquer the original inhabitants, either pushing them away into distant and mountainous corners of the land, or entirely absorbing them. In this manner the original boundaries of the Empire had already begun to extend over a much wider area at the beginning of the Hsia Dynasty, when no less than 12 feudal districts are mentioned.

**Religious.**—The early religious ideas of the Chinese deserve more than a passing allusion. Without some knowledge of this subject it will be impossible to understand that peculiar line of thought which gradually evolved their later systems of philosophy, morals and religion. The primitive religion of the Chinese soon passed out of that stage of superstition in which human sacrifices seemed to be necessary to appease the anger of imaginary deities. On the death of any person of importance human victims formerly used to be immolated and buried with him, but at quite an early period, about B.C. 600, blocks of wood carved in the form of human beings were interred instead. Throughout their classical writings traces are to be found of the recognition of an over-ruling first cause, known by different names, such as 天 "Heaven" or 上帝 "Supreme Ruler" or by other terms which are with more or less reason



translated as "God." Every locality had its presiding genius or spirit who was supposed to dwell in a mountain set apart for his use. When a new district or locality was settled one of the first acts the Emperor was called to perform was to determine the mountain where the spirit resided, and then to consecrate it. Traces of this custom may be found at the present day. There was no priesthood. The Emperor acted as the Great High Priest for the whole nation in performing the sacrificial rites by which the favour of High Heaven was propitiated and maintained. The rulers of the districts or states prayed to the secondary deities for the people over whom they ruled. The heads of families had also ceremonies to perform on behalf of their children and the members of their households. The earliest notices of the religious condition of the Chinese show that they were much more spiritual in their beliefs and freer from the grosser practices of idolatry than any other pagan people whose history has been placed on record. Schlegel has said that "amongst the great nations of primitive antiquity who stood the nearest, or at least very near to the source of sacred tradition or the word of primitive revelation, the Chinese hold a very high place."

**Ancestral Worship.**—The Chinese from the very earliest times gave religious worship to the spirits of their departed relatives and friends, treating them as if actually present. This worship is still observed by all classes, from the Emperor down to the meanest subject, and has an enormous hold on the national mind. These departed spirits were supposed to have a knowledge of the circumstances of their descendants, and to be able to affect them for good or ill. Every family or clan had its ancestral hall or shrine where only this worship was performed. Important events were told to ancestors at these shrines, and important business connected with the family was transacted there. The title given to one of the Ministers of the Emperor Shun was "Arranger of the Ancestral Temple."

## 8. THE HSIA DYNASTY.

**The Great Yü.**—The accession of the Great Yü [B.C. 2205] forms one of the most remarkable eras in Chinese History. Hitherto the throne had been more or less elective, but from this period it became, with few exceptions, hereditary in the eldest son. Yü naturally acquired the veneration and love of the people whom his great engineering skill had delivered from threatened destruction by the floods. When

he undertook this severe task in the preceding reign his predecessor had been put to death for failing to accomplish it: and the same fate awaited Yü if he proved unsuccessful. During the nine years he was occupied at this work he is said to have thrice passed the door of his own house without so much as entering. On ascending the throne he was already almost worn out in mind and body, so that, although supported by the most able councillors, he accomplished nothing worthy of record during his reign of seven years.

Yet he showed great energy in the work of administration. He is said to have left his table three times during one meal, in order to give instructions to his officials: and to have hurried away from his bath to public business without remembering to adjust his dishevelled hair. Hence up to the present day he is held up as the national model for diligence, alike for sovereign and officials.

**The Tablet of Yü.**—There is an ancient inscription of 77 characters on Mount Hêng in Hunan which relates to the great inundation and the work of Yü. Notices of it are found in the writings of poets and historians of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., and it was for a long time considered to be a genuine relic of the Hsia Dynasty. But authentic copies of it are found only as far back as the thirteenth century A.D., and careful investigation has shown it to be an entire forgery as to date. The characters are in what is known as the "tadpole" style, from their peculiar wriggling shapes. A copy on stone of this "Tablet of Yü" was placed by the Governor-General at Wu-ch'ang, in the "temple of the Yellow Stork," overlooking the Yang-tsz-kiang, in the year 1868. The Mausoleum of the Emperor Yü is about a mile from the city of Shaou-hing in the province of Chekiang. Here stands a great monument with a copy of the old inscription, accompanied by a transliteration into modern Chinese.

The dynasty of Hsia lasted 439 years, and had 17 Emperors, none of whom seems to have done anything worthy of record except Yü, noted for his virtues, and the last Emperor, Kwei, noted for his vices. We can only notice three of them :—

**Chung-kang.**—Chung-kang was the fourth Emperor of the dynasty. In his reign [2127 B.C.] occurred the first of the eclipses of the sun recorded in Chinese History. Nearly 1,000 solar eclipses and over 500 lunar eclipses are carefully recorded, and many of them have been verified by Western astronomers. This first eclipse was identified by Professor RUSSELL at Peking, after laboriously calculating no less than 36 eclipses, on which his proofs depended.

**Shao-kang and the Empress Min.**—Shao-kang was the 6th Emperor of this Dynasty. His mother, the Empress Min, narrowly escaped a general massacre of the whole Imperial family during a revolt, and fled to a distant city. She caused the youthful Shao-kang to work as a shepherd-boy in attending flocks and in other menial capacities in order to keep him in disguise. After many vicissitudes the rebellion was quelled and Shao-kang with his mother returned with acclamations to the capital. He and his son ruled the country most successfully, but their successors gave themselves up to the most licentious pleasures, and brought the Imperial name into supreme contempt. These evils culminated in the Emperor Chieh-kwei at the end of the dynasty.

**Chieh-kwei.**—Chieh-kwei, the last Emperor, began to reign in 1818 B.C., and in concert with his Empress practiced every kind of violence and extortion in order to procure treasures, which they spent in the most reckless and voluptuous manner. Both inside and outside the palace the vilest orgies were celebrated, and the old statesmen when they attempted to remonstrate were discarded or put to death. At length Ch'êng-T'ang, a descendant of Hwang-ti, was induced by the disaffected party to take up the reins of government. Chieh-kwei on offering battle was defeated, and fled into an obscure place where he died, three years afterwards, despised and deserted. Thus ended the Hsia Dynasty.

**General character of Chinese annals.**—Chinese annals are often filled up with very dry narrations, having only here and there an oasis possessing a certain amount of interest. The doings of the Emperor and his Ministers occupy the whole field of vision. The condition, habits, religion, arts or occupations of the people, and other interesting subjects we should like to know about, are almost ignored. The Sovereigns controlled the records of their reigns as far as they were able, and only regarded the people as a mere background to the pictures of themselves they wished to hand down to posterity. This feature obtains in the ancient records of nearly all nations, and makes such history an uninviting study.

## 9. THE SHANG DYNASTY.

**Ch'êng-T'ang.**—Ch'êng-T'ang ascended the vacant throne and founded the Shang Dynasty, which was so named from his patrimonial domains. It continued 644 years, from 1766 to 1122, B.C., under

28 Sovereigns. Its records are very meagre, and the condition of the Empire does not appear to have undergone any very important changes. Ch'êng-T'ang is described as paying religious worship to the Supreme Ruler, or Shang-ti, under which name God was evidently intended. He said:—"O ruler of High Heaven, there is now a great drought, and "it is right I should be held responsible for it. I do not know but "that I have offended the powers above and below." He blamed his own conduct in 6 particulars. It is recorded that scarcely were his words ended when the rain began to descend in heavy showers. In his reign the country enjoyed a restoration of peace and prosperity.

**Chow-sin.**—The most noted Sovereign of the Shang Dynasty appears to have been Chow-sin. He was a ruler not without ability and energy, but passionate and impulsive. In his reign cruelty and licentiousness appear to have reached their climax. The remonstrances of his faithful Ministers were all in vain. The people became disaffected and the dynasty was threatened with ruin.

**Wên-wang.**—Wên-wang was the ruler of the small state of Chow in the North-west of China, which he governed with such wisdom that emigrants came to him from every quarter. His power became extensive and his reputation spread throughout the Empire. He had at one time been imprisoned by Chow-sin, and while in prison he wrote the "Book of Changes," or *I-king*, and made many improvements in literature in connection with his brother, Duke Chow. At length he united his principal followers into an army which he prepared to lead against Chow-sin: but, dying before his work was accomplished, he left his crown and power to Wu-wang, his son.

**Wu-wang.**—Wu-wang, assisted by his uncle the Duke of Chow, led his forces against Chow-sin, who was at the head of a much larger army. They met at a place north of the Yellow River in Honan, and Chow-sin was hopelessly defeated. He fled to his magnificent palace and burned himself with all his treasures, thus ending the dynasty of Shang.

**General sketch of the dynasty.**—From the *Shu-king* we get fragmentary notices of the polity, religion, jurisdiction, and general condition of the people during the Shang Dynasty. Both by precept and example this ethical classic shows on what the prosperity or downfall of a State depends. Outside of the Bible there are no writings which can compare with some of the chapters of the *Shu-king* for loftiness and purity of conception. From the Bamboo Annals we merely gather a succession of the names of the rulers, with here and there accounts

of remarkable occurrences in the natural and political world. It is shown that the condition of the State during each reign depended chiefly on the character of the rulers. The bad Sovereigns are noticed at greater length than the good ones. All droughts, famines, and other calamities are supposed to be connected with political misconduct. But taking a general view of this dynasty there was scarcely any progress made in any branch of civilization.

#### 10. THE CHOW DYNASTY UP TO THE TIME OF CONFUCIUS AND LAO-TSZ.

**Wu-wang.**—No period of Chinese history is more celebrated than the founding of this dynasty by Wu-wang. He removed the capital from the province of Honan to Singan, the present capital of the province of Shensi, where it remained for a long time. His uncle, the Duke Chow, became his director and supporter, and his counsels as recorded in the *Shu-king* are full of wisdom and justice. The Emperor is represented as invoking the assistance of the Supreme Ruler in his affairs, and as returning thanks, with prayer and sacrifices, when successful. But he committed a great political error in causing the Empire to be divided into a number of petty states, retaining for himself too small a portion of territory and power to enable him and his successors to exercise the necessary Imperial control. The territorial rulers soon considered and called themselves kings; only the portions immediately under the control of the Emperor being allowed the title of the "Middle Kingdom." These different tributary states were the cause of endless troubles, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Wu-wang could enforce their allegiance.

**Ching-wang.**—Wu-wang was succeeded by Ching-wang, who kept up the lustre of his predecessor. After him came Li-wang and other rulers who gradually lost much of the control of the Empire, and were unable to quell the discontent of the people.

**Ping-wang.**—Ping-wang, on assuming the Imperial power, not only had to contend against the continual quarrels among the tributary rulers, which became more and more serious every year, but also against the frequent invasions of the Tartars from the North and West.

**Wars of tributary states.**—It would not prove either interesting or profitable to follow the Chinese historians through all the chaos of civil conflict and revolution which filled this era. A mere sketch will suffice for our purpose. The disorders of the Chow Dynasty up to the time of Confucius and Lao-tsz required as much labour to adjust them

as the physical disorder of the flood which called forth the labours of the great Yü so many ages previously. The theory of government established by Wu-wang and the Duke Chow, and based on ceremonial and political regulations was good in itself, but the carrying of it into practice was next to impossible. The rulers of states were left at considerable liberty in the administration of their internal affairs and in their relations with one another. They were to be content with their allotments of territory and not to infringe on their neighbours'. They were to maintain a good understanding by means of visits to the Imperial Court and by interchanging communications on all important events occurring within their boundaries. Any injustice was to be reported to the Emperor, who would call together his forces and punish the offender. This theory presupposed almost absolute perfection in the feudal lords, and overwhelming superiority of force on the part of the Emperor. Neither of these conditions existing, the Empire was continually torn by opposing factions. Instead of the harmony and righteousness which the theory required, the several states were always biting and devouring one another, the large and strong oppressing and absorbing the small and weak. The system of presiding chiefs was established to counteract the evil. These chiefs knew no other power above them than the Emperor's. This system, however, did not work well, for the states had thus two sets of rulers to support instead of one. The various "Dukes" or rulers of states were continually being summoned to the Capital and made to renew their vows of loyalty and mutual allegiance with ceremonies of sacrifice and potations of blood. Mencius characterizes this period as follows :—"The Empire had fallen into decay, " and right principles had disappeared. Perverse discourses and oppressive " deeds were waxen rife. Ministers murdered their rulers, and sons their " fathers." It was in the midst of this unsettled state of affairs that Confucius was born in the reign of the Emperor Ling-wang, or the "Spiritual ruler," [B.C. 551] and it was to remedy these existing evils of the tributary states that he set himself vigorously to work as a reformer—in fact, this was the key-note of his whole system of philosophy.

## 11. THE CONDITION OF CHINA AT THE TIME OF CONFUCIUS AND LAO-TSZ.

**Importance of a thorough understanding.**—It is of the utmost importance to understand clearly the intellectual and social condition of China during the Chow Dynasty, as well as the recorded

sayings and doings of previous ages, because these formed the soil out of which the philosophies both of Confucius and Lao-tsz grew, however much the two systems may differ in their characteristics. Confucius, in particular, seems to have invented little or nothing new, but to have used all his energy in compiling and collating what he thought were the most valuable relics of the past, while he extolled the wisdom and virtues of the Ancients, framing therefrom a system suitable for the exigencies of the times that, with all its defects, has stood the test of thousands of years, and proved an incalculable benefit to the nation in past ages, however much it may now be behind the times.

**Extent of the country.**—The China of the Chow Dynasty was a mere fraction of what we now call China. It extended on the north and west nearly to the limit of the present boundaries because it was in these directions that the first Chinese settlers entered the country. The whole of the centre and south was still inhabited by the aboriginal tribes.

**Appearance and dwellings.**—Although history has so little to say respecting the condition of the Chinese at the period now under consideration, it is possible to obtain considerable information from the *Shi-king*, or book of poetry collected and compiled by Confucius from various existing sources. From this work we gather that the “black-haired nation” were a tall, strong and vigorous race, clothing themselves with silk, wool and fur garments, paying particular attention to personal appearance and the arrangement of the hair in both sexes. Their houses were ordinarily made of earth, and only the officials and wealthy families built them of wood, or brick and stone. The walls of their cities were generally of earth surrounded by a moat out of which the earth for the walls had been dug.

**Occupations.**—Hunting was at first an important means of subsistence, the bow and arrow being the usual weapons. The Emperors appear to have been extremely fond of hunting, and occasionally grand hunts or *battues* were engaged in for the purpose of killing the deer, wild boar, wild oxen and, perhaps, the rhinoceros, with which the land abounded. Fishing with nets and lines was also much practised. Agriculture and pasturage were carried on with great success, and irrigation was managed in the most ingenious manner. The cereals cultivated were rice, wheat, barley, buckwheat, and two sorts of millet. Maize was entirely unknown. The plough, hoe, scythe and sickle were much the same rude, simple instruments as are seen at the present day. Many kinds of fruits and vegetables, flax and hemp, the mulberry-tree for feeding silkworms, indigo and various

yellow and red dye-stuff plants were cultivated around the homesteads. The articles of food and the methods of cooking and serving them seem to have been almost the same as are still seen in China. Wine was a common drink, but milk was not an article of diet, nor ever has been among the Chinese. The working of metals was carried to great perfection.

**Military affairs.**—In military affairs much dependence seems to have been placed on their war chariots, each of which carried 3 mailed warriors, and was followed by 50 to 100 light-armed foot-soldiers. The chariots were drawn by four horses, also covered with armour or otherwise protected. Three hundred such chariots formed a division of the army. War was then regarded as the most important of all arts, and the treatise originally written by Sun-tsz, about the time of Confucius, is still regarded as an authority in military affairs. The organization, equipment and commissariat are minutely described, contrasting very favourably with the present unsatisfactory state of the Chinese Army.

**Ceremonies and worship.**—The superstitions of those times, as placed on record, agree generally with those of the present day. Casting lots, and divination were very prevalent. At each of the four seasons, and especially at the two equinoxes, there were solemn ceremonies or sacrifices in honour of Shang-ti and of the celestial spirits. Ancestral worship grew into great importance. There were many festivals and religious observances at which music of various kinds was used, with songs and dances. The music, both vocal and instrumental, received much attention, and reached a stage of considerable development. Confucius has left it on record that on one occasion after hearing a certain melody played he was so much overcome by it as not to know the taste of meat for three months; and on another occasion he spent ten days after learning to play a piece of music trying to understand the motive or sentiment it was intended to convey. The ancient sages appear to have regarded music as a sort of political means for smoothing away ruggedness of character and making men amenable to law and order. The dances were a kind of slow, solemn posturing, not filling the place that has been occupied by dancing in Western countries, but forming, in fact, a part of the religious worship or ceremonies. All kind of ceremonies were carried to extremes among the upper and official classes, while at the Imperial Court they were burdensome to an extent that seems scarcely credible. This legacy of the past is still kept up in China.

**Medical art.**—The medical art had received much attention so that the physicians of the times classified all diseases according to the four



seasons of the year. Headaches and neuralgic affections belonged to the Spring; skin diseases of all kinds to the Summer; fevers and agues to the Autumn, while bronchial and pulmonary complaints were relegated to the Winter. Medicines were classified under the 5 heads of herbs, trees, animals, minerals, and grains. They had the 5 flavours of sour, acrid, salt, bitter and sweet. All medicines and diseases were arranged as hot or cold, hot medicines being for cold diseases and *vice versa*.

**Education.**—A University founded during this dynasty remains to the present day under its original name of Kwo-tsz-Chien. At the beginning of the 14th century it was removed from Si-ngan-fu, the ancient capital, to Peking, where it is still in operation. It possessed a copy of the whole 13 Chinese classics cut on 182 columns of massive granite, forming an enormous stone library. This was too heavy to remove to Peking, and hence a duplicate was made there which is still one of the great sights of the metropolis. Education flourished under the fostering care of the Emperors. The art of writing received much attention, and the oldest actual specimens of authentic inscriptions date from about B.C. 800. They are found at Peking, in the Confucian temple near this University, inscribed on ten irregular-shaped blocks of stone called "stone drums." All writings and original documents have been lost, paper not having been invented until several centuries later. Ancient coins, however, bearing legible inscriptions go back to many centuries before Christ.

**Polygamy.**—The marriage ceremony was carried on as at present, with great pomp and rejoicing. The matrimonial negotiations were conducted and adjusted by a man and a woman on behalf of the bride and bridegroom, whereas now only a female "go-between" is employed. Besides the principal wife, secondary wives or concubines were sometimes maintained in considerable numbers, and instances where domestic harmony and the absence of jealousy prevailed under such circumstances are placed on record with great commendation. The low status assigned to woman, and the prevalent polygamy were among the greatest evils of those times. With this element of depravity and disorder working throughout the nation, only limited by the means of each family, the wonder is that the moral condition of the Empire, bad as it was, was not worse. Neither Confucius nor Lao-tsz seem to have made the least attempt to check it. The only preservative element was the filial piety, the strong family affections, and the respect for the aged. These were more or less cherished up to the time of Confucius, who emphasised them as the greatest of moral duties in all his teachings,

and as the foundation for all domestic and national prosperity. He failed entirely to see the evils of polygamy, but looked at every problem chiefly from a worldly, political, or material point of view. His contemporary Lao-tsz, on the contrary, attempted to look beyond material things and traced the existing evils to the need of intellectual and spiritual refinement, which he showed could only be obtained by a knowledge of the invisible God and of man's inner self. The spiritual nature being properly adjusted, he taught that material things would take care of themselves.

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## Part II.

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### LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIUS.

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#### 1. HIS BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS.

**His ancestry.**—According to some biographers the family of K'ung or Confucius was one of the most illustrious in the Empire. It has been traced in uninterrupted descent through nearly 18 centuries from a minister who attracted the notice of the great Emperor Shun. The Emperor gave him a small territory called Shang, in the present province of Honan, as a proof of his favour. Thirteen descendants successively governed this little State till in 1765, B.C., one of them founded the dynasty of Shang. For more than 600 years the Imperial power was in the hands of this family till the dynasty was overthrown by Wu-wang, who bestowed on each of the brothers of the last emperor a territory in the state of Sung. A descendant from the younger of the brothers, during political troubles, had to take shelter in the state of Lu, where his son, Shuh-liang-hê the father of Confucius, was born.

**His parents.**—Shuh-liang-hê was noted for his strength and courage, and served for some time as a soldier, after which he was

appointed as prefect or chief magistrate of the city of Tsow. His wife died leaving him with nine children, all girls. Having no male heirs he felt it his duty to marry again, and accordingly begged the head of the noble house of Yen to give him one of his three daughters. Yen dared not refuse, and left it to his daughters to decide which of them should be married. The two eldest remained silent, but the younger one, Ching-tsai, declared she was ready to obey her father's commands and become the old magistrate's wife. Ching-tsai after her marriage made a journey to the *Ni* mountain and invoked its guardian spirit that she might be enabled to have a son. In due time a son was born in accordance with her prayers, and the heart of Shuh-liang-hé was gladdened that his family line would now be continued.

**His birth.**—Chinese biographers could hardly be expected to allow that Confucius was born as an ordinary mortal, and hence they doubtless felt that some supernatural manifestations ought to be reported. A few days before his birth a strange animal called the "*chi-lin*" appeared to his mother, bearing a precious stone in its mouth on which was an inscription predicting the future greatness of the son she was about to bear. She took the stone and fastened a red silk thread around the horns of the animal. At the time of his birth celestial music was heard in the air, and two dragons were seen there, while five of the glorified heroes of antiquity reassumed their mortal form, and appeared to do homage to the new-born babe. When the child was washed, certain characters were found on his breast also referring to his future greatness and to his being a throneless king. There were, of course, great rejoicings among the friends and neighbours of the old prefect at the birth of this son in his old age.

**His education.**—Three years after the birth of Confucius his father died, and the future care, as well as education of the child, devolved upon the youthful widow. She is represented as a woman of more than usual strength of character, and well able to train and guide him in his earlier years. Of course, we must not suppose she was like the small-footed Chinese women of the present day, or that her clothing resembled theirs. There can be little doubt that Confucius owed much to his mother's careful teaching, as has been the case with so many of the great men of the world. He was always grave and sedate, and, avoiding rude and boisterous games, used to take pleasure in imitating the various ceremonies and ritualistic observances of the times. It is said that his mother, not having the means to engage for him a private tutor at home, sent him to a school at the age of seven. Here

he made great progress, and soon was in high favour with his teacher as well as his school-fellows for his close and untiring application to his studies. At the age of 14 he had exhausted all the subjects his teacher was acquainted with, and assisted him in the scholastic duties. He tells us himself that at the age of 15 the acquisition of knowledge was the one object that engrossed all his thoughts. It is said that the poverty of his youth led him to resort to hunting, fishing and other employments to support himself and his mother, and these served to strengthen his physical powers while they gave him practical or executive ability. His mother, at his seventeenth year, succeeded in inducing him to give up his studious habits and to seek for remunerative public employment, in which he was soon successful.

## 2. HIS ENTRY INTO PUBLIC LIFE.

**His first appointment.**—The fame of Confucius as a scholar enabled him to obtain a subordinate position in connection with the Imperial grain stores. The people had to pay a tax of about one-tenth of the value of their agricultural and pastoral products in grain. The method of collecting this tax and the correct amount were important questions, upon which the prosperity of the State and happiness of the people largely depended. He gave this question of political economy his most careful personal attention. Rising at dawn he entered into the most minute details of his official work, which was so thorough and satisfactory that he soon found promotion.

**His marriage.**—At the age of 19 his pay was sufficient to enable him to marry. His wife, chosen, of course, by his mother, was named Chi-kwan, and belonged to a noble family of the State of Sung. In the following year his only son was born. So important had Confucius already grown that the Duke Chao, Prince of Lu, sent one of his courtiers to congratulate him on this event, and to present him with two carp—a fish then held in the highest esteem. The name of this fish, *Li*, was given to the infant in remembrance of this mark of the prince's favour. He afterwards had at least one daughter. In his discourses he always held marriage in the highest honour, and on hearing of his wife's death was greatly moved, speaking of her in the most affectionate terms.

**His mother's death.**—When he was 24 years of age his mother died and, according to Chinese custom, he had to retire for a time from public life. He was at first overwhelmed with intense grief,

and he long continued to mourn her loss with the deepest sorrow. He buried her with great pomp and ceremony at Fang-shan, the original home of his ancestors, and removed the remains of his father to the same place so that his parents might lie side by side. He carried out to the fullest extent possible all the funeral rites, and spoke of the neglect which often prevailed in this matter as one of the surest signs of the degeneracy of the age. He kept up the mourning for 3 years in the neighbourhood of Fang-shan. At the expiration of the term he deposited his mourning robes upon his mother's tomb and returned home, where he shut himself up for ten days before resuming his occupations.

**His career as a public teacher.**—At the age of 27 Confucius seems to have entirely given up his official life and to have entered on a career as a public teacher. He received as scholars all who wished for his instruction. The doctrines of antiquity were his great theme. He wanted earnest students rather than those who could pay high fees. He said:—"I do not open up the truth to any one who is not eager to get knowledge, nor help out any one who is not anxious to find an explanation himself. When I have presented one corner of a subject to any one and he cannot learn from it the other three corners I do not repeat the lesson." While teaching as a means of support he did not neglect his own higher studies, so that at the age of 30 he tells us he "stood firm" in his learning. His fame had already expanded far and wide, so that his scholars were many. His mission as a reformer had become clear to him, and he longed to begin his work.

### 3. HIS COMMENCEMENT OF WORK AS A REFORMER.

**His visit to the metropolis.**—A favourable opportunity presenting itself, Confucius visited the capital of the Chow dynasty, the city of Lo-yang. Here he wished to learn more of the customs and teachings of the ancients, as well as their ceremonies and music. He went through the royal library, the temple, the sacrificial grounds, and the "Hall of Light," a noted building where audience was given to the princes of tributary states. In this Hall were paintings of the ancient sovereigns, from Yaou and Shun downwards, besides other objects of interest, by all of which Confucius was greatly affected. During his stay at the metropolis Confucius was the guest of Chang-hung, an official who was also a philosopher and musician, and by whom he was treated with the greatest kindness. It was under his

hospitable roof that Confucius enquired about the music of the ancients, and received instruction in their art. Chang-hung's admiration of his visitor was so great that he described him in glowing terms to the court nobles; but the Emperor did not regard him with favour, and during the whole of the time spent at the capital he does not appear to have been admitted to a single audience, or to have been offered any employment.

**His interview with Lao-tsz.**—Confucius was most desirous of meeting with Lao-tsz, the founder of Taoism, who was then living not far from the city. The two philosophers met and exchanged views. Lao-tsz did not seem to think much of Confucius, and is reported to have said to him among other things:—"Those whom you talk about are dead, and their bones are mouldered to dust; only their words remain. Put away your proud air and many desires, your insinuating habit and wild will. These are of no advantage to you. This is all which I have to tell you." These words were quite in keeping with the teaching of Lao-tsz. The love of ceremonies, the reverence for antiquity, and the self-righteousness apparent in Confucius were very much against the spirit of quietism and rationalism of his great contemporary. Confucius was apparently humbled, and said to his disciples on this occasion:—"There is the dragon. I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Lao-tsz, and can only compare him to the dragon." The conference between the two philosophers was doubtless long and interesting. Lao-tsz was half-a-century older than Confucius and made a profound impression on his mind. The grandeur of Lao-tsz' thoughts so overwhelmed him that he kept silent for three days, when at the request of his friends he explained why he was so much impressed. It was doubtless because the spirit of the past, of which he was such a profound worshipper, appeared small indeed in contrast with the Infinite eternal and creative Intelligence, or the "Tao," as placed before him by the aged Lao-tsz.

**His refusal of office.**—Returning to Lu, the fame of Confucius increased, and his disciples are said to have numbered three thousand. These, of course, did not form a community living together, but merely resorted to their master when they wanted his counsel or instruction. Political difficulties arising in Lu, he went to Ch'i, where the Duke Ching sent for him and offered him the city of Sin-chew with its revenues. The sage flatly declined the offer in the following words:—"A superior man will not receive rewards except for services rendered. I have given advice to Duke Ching, but he has not followed it, and now he would

“endow me with this place. Very far is he from understanding me.” On another occasion when this duke wanted to reward Confucius, his Minister, Yen-ying, dissuaded him in the following words, which show how unfavourably Confucius impressed some of his contemporaries:—“These scholars are impracticable and cannot be imitated. They are haughty and conceited of their own views, so that they will not be content with inferior positions. They set a high value on all funeral ceremonies, give way to their grief, and will waste their property on great burials, so that they would only be injurious to the common manners. This Mr. Kung has a thousand peculiarities. It would take generations to exhaust all that he knows about the ceremonies of going up and coming down. This is not the time to examine into his rules of propriety. If you, prince, wish to employ him to change the customs of Ch’i you will not be making the people your primary consideration.” Soon after this Confucius returned, disappointed, to Lu, where he stayed 15 years without official employment, the whole state being in great confusion. During this period he pursued his teaching and studies, and compiled the “Book of Poetry” with the “Rules of Propriety,” while he collated and arranged the mass of material he had accumulated to form the basis of the remainder of the “Five Classics.”

**His skill as a hunter and athlete.**—It must not be supposed that Confucius avoided muscular exercise or athletic sports, as is the case with Chinese officials and literary men of the present day. He was emphatically a “muscular” philosopher, excelling in feats of strength and skill, and delighting in gymnastic exercises during his hours of seclusion. As a charioteer he is said to have attained great celebrity. The chariots, drawn by four horses abreast and used for purposes of war, required great skill and courage to drive them, and the driver of the royal chariot was always a high dignitary of the State. Not only was Confucius fond of travelling about, but he had a passion for hunting. On one occasion, when out on an excursion with a number of his disciples, he came across a party of sportsmen in pursuit of game. Much to the surprise of his followers and in spite of their earnest protestations he joined the party and remained with it a week. His defence was that not only was hunting a relaxation, but a duty handed down from antiquity, as ridding the country of noxious wild animals so as to offer them for sacrifices in honour of ancestors. ✓

**His acceptance of office.**—In the year 500 B.C. Confucius was made Chief Magistrate of the town of Chung-tu, where by applying the principles of government he had so long taught, he soon brought about a

wonderful reformation in the manners and deportment of the people. The ruler of Lu, Duke Ting, raised him from this position to the higher office of Minister of Works and subsequently to that of Minister of Justice. During his occupancy of these posts he carried out the laws to the very letter with the most stern inflexibility, even executing a noble of high rank. The nobility and courtiers hated him, but he "became the idol of the people and flew in songs through their mouths," while the state of Lu enjoyed great prosperity. This raised the fears and jealousy of the neighbouring State of Chi whose ruler determined to undermine the influence of the sage. He therefore sent 80 beautiful dancing girls and 120 of the finest horses he could find, as a present to Duke Ting. As a consequence, Confucius was soon neglected, and resigned his post in disgust in the 56th year of his age, after having been in these various offices about four years.

#### 4. HIS LATER YEARS.

**His wanderings from State to State.**—Confucius slowly and sadly travelled away from his native state of Lu with his many followers, feeling that his work as a political reformer had been more or less a failure, and found a home at the capital of the principality of Wei, where he remained only a year. The bad treatment he received led him to resume his wanderings, which continued year after year. At times he had to suffer severe privations, dangers and fatigues, but he always exhibited the same earnestness and steadiness of purpose. People flocked to him from all quarters for instruction, and many of his sayings were preserved in writing by his disciples.

**His return to Lu.**—It was not till he had been in exile for thirteen years that Kai, the new Prince of Lu, invited him to return, sending him valuable gifts. He was now 69 years of age as he returned to his fatherland. The hostile feelings of the nobles and courtiers seemed to have become greatly modified, and no doubt the lessons learned in adversity had exerted a softening influence in the disposition of the philosopher himself. The excitement and turmoil of public life had lost its charm, and he contented himself with entering freely into conversation with the prince and his ministers without attempting to combat or influence their opinions.

**His completion of his writings.**—Every moment of his life was now employed in giving the finishing touches to the revision and collation of the ancient classics, and in conversations with his friends or disciples on those all-absorbing topics which referred to the right performance of the highest duties of man. He continued in the



*rôle* of a teacher to the very end, and gave those grandiloquent utterances of his ideas which, however commonplace they may seem to us, have procured for him among the succeeding millions of his fellow countrymen the lofty title of "The most holy teacher of ancient times." Having completed his literary labours he placed his books upon an altar and reverently bowed in an act of worship, thanking Heaven that he had been enabled to finish his life-work.

**His death.**—While engaged on his last book, the *Ch'un-chiu* or "Spring and Autumn Classic," a servant of the Prince of Lu caught a *ch'i-lin*, which died soon after its capture. It is described as a quadruped having fleshy protuberances in the place of horns, scales all over the body like those of a dragon, and the feet of a stag. It was brought home and cast down in a public place where great crowds came to see it. Confucius no sooner beheld it than he showed signs of the greatest consternation, wept bitterly, and would have fallen to the ground had he not been held up by his friends. It is said that the animal bore on its small horns the piece of silk which his mother had attached to the one that appeared before his birth. He cried out :—"For whom have you come?" and then amid his tears exclaimed :—"The course of my doctrine is run." It was two years, however, after this event that he died. Early one morning, we are told, he got up and moved about before his door crooning over :—

"The great mountain must crumble :

"The strong beam must break ;

"And the wise man wither away like a plant."

His last words were :—"No intelligent monarch arises; there is "not one in the Empire that will make me his master. My time has come "to die." He then lay down on his couch, and after seven days of lethargy expired. His death took place B.C. 479. His funeral was most elaborate and impressive. His tomb was made in the form of three cupola-shaped mounds, in the centre one of which the massive coffin was buried. His descendants to the number of several thousands remain at the present day, and the tomb has been carefully preserved.

## 5. HIS WRITINGS.

**Their Object.**—Confucius seems to have regarded the ancient records existing at his time almost as if they were divinely inspired. Anything like supplanting them by writings of his own would have appeared to him to be gross presumption. He once declared to his disciples :—"I "love and revere the ancients; for their writings are so far-reaching and

"comprehensive that I am never weary of studying them. They afford, indeed, an inexhaustible mine of intellectual wealth, and so it is that when I write I do not seek to set forth or originate new ideas, but confine myself as much as possible to compiling and elaborating all that was taught by the holy sages of antiquity." Hence he collected together everything that had been handed down as a sacred legacy from the past; after due examination and deliberation he selected all he deemed most worthy to be retained, and discarded whatever he thought of an inferior character. This collection he classified and rearranged so as to form the series known under the title of the "Five Classics." Of these five works the only one remaining in the exact state that Confucius left it is the *Yih-king* or "Book of Changes." The others were destroyed by the Emperor Tsin-shih, in the 3rd century B.C., when the general burning of books took place, but were afterwards restored, as far as possible, from stray copies or portions that had been concealed in different places. The *Yih-king*, treating only on divination and having no political teachings, was allowed to remain uninjured.

**The Yih-king or Book of Changes.**—The original *Yih-king*, perhaps one of the oldest works in existence, is said to have been written by Wan-wang whilst in prison, about 1150 B.C., and further elaborated by his brother, Duke Chow. It is based on the eight trigrams of Fu-hsi, 2852 B.C., and the sixty-four hexagrams invented by Wan-wang, who added a short text or explanation to each. Confucius took up the work and added the remainder, as it now appears, called the ten "wings," or sections, with commentary. He bestowed so much labour upon it that the cords, which held the boards of his copy together, were worn asunder, and had to be renewed three times within a very short period. He said he would have gladly devoted 50 more years of life to its study and elucidation,—such was the fascination it had for him. It is still regarded by the Chinese literati as an embodiment of all knowledge. Over 1,500 works have been written upon it. As it now stands it is, to the uninitiated, only one of the curiosities of Oriental literature. A translation into English is published by Professor Legge. Confucius tells us in his commentary that there were four important points connected with it, by which the sages regulated their actions: (1) The study of its terms, to bring their language into harmony with its teachings; (2) of its changes, for the due guidance of their actions; (3) of its symbols, for the principles involved in the construction of mechanical apparatus; (4) of its prognostications, in order to acquire

a knowledge of results. Hence, people of high character when about to take action in public or private matters should make enquiry through the transmutations as to chances of success or failure, and govern their conduct according to the answers received. In short, Confucius claims that this book is a sort of key to a system of Universal philosophy, and Chinese scholars seem to justify this view to a considerable extent.

**The Shu-king or Historical Records.**—This, the most ancient historical work in existence, commences with the reign of Yao, B.C. 2356, and ends B.C. 721, giving an unbroken sequence of events extending over a period of more than 1,600 years. Its historical accuracy is undoubted, but its chief interest is in affording an immense amount of information respecting the moral, social, political, and religious condition of a people who, struggling against natural obstacles of a formidable kind, succeeded in building up an empire, the foundations of which remain to the present day. The original work was destroyed by the Emperor Ch'î, and the portions now restored are more or less mutilated. With all its imperfections, it will ever stand out in all the majesty of hoary age as a grand old book. The portions referring to the Emperor Yao, Shun and Yü show how those monarchs were distinguished by moderation and singleness of purpose, while the prominent Emperors of the Shang and Chow Dynasties were noted for firmness and persistency. Personal rectitude seems to be the key-note of all their recorded sayings and doings. A great number of the ethical sections into which the work is divided are of a very high order. Many of its lessons of practical wisdom are applicable to all ages and nations. It contains, however, a notice of the revised code of laws made about the middle of the 10th century, B.C., in which not only minor crimes, but even such as were punishable by death could be commuted by payment of fines. It is to this code, upon which subsequent ones have been framed, that much of the widespread official corruption and the low tone of public morals is to be attributed. This revised code Confucius sanctioned by allowing it to be recorded in the *Shu-king*.

**The Shi-king or Book of Odes.**—The *Shi-king* appears to be a selection made by Confucius from the various lyrical compositions scattered over the Empire. He considered that no man's education was complete who had not studied them, and that as models of purity of thought they had no equal. The number of these odes or lyrics is 305. Probably their metrical character made them so easily remembered that there was little or no diminution of them when recovered after the burning of the books by the Emperor Ch'î. The whole collection is

divided into 4 parts. First come 160 songs illustrating the manners and customs, and may fairly be called "Songs of the people." Next come 74 odes sung at the various ceremonials and festivities connected with the meetings of the feudal princes. The third section resembles in character the second, and has 31 odes. The last section contains 40 pieces used for the temple and the altar, and therefore of a distinctive religious character. The style is always bold and simple, and the versification peculiar. One of its most striking features is the entire absence of all mythological allusions, and the general presence of a deep religious feeling. Among the great variety of subjects there are a few love-songs, one of which has been translated from Book I., Part 7, Ode 2, as follows:—

"Chung-tsz, Chung-tsz, I do implore, you pass not through our village more.  
 "Nor trample down beneath your feet, the shrubs betwixt the house and street :  
 "Please do not come again this way, my father's will I must obey—  
 "I dare not love thee!

"Chung-tsz, Chung-tsz, climb not the wall, it is so high and you may fall,  
 "And crush the tree which stands below, planted by me long, long ago.  
 "Oh, what would then my brother say? You know his will, I must obey—  
 "I dare not love thee.

"Chung-tsz, Chung-tsz, on no pretence, dare you break through the garden fence,  
 "When I am there; you must be wise for people have such prying eyes,  
 "Oh, do not come I beg and pray, or you will make the gossips say—  
 "I dare to love thee!"

**The Li-ki or Book of Rites and Ceremonies.**—The *Li-ki* is a sort of digest of the laws and canons of the ancient sovereigns with respect to governmental and social affairs. Confucius regarded it as of the greatest importance. The three classics already referred to he considered would have been incomplete, without the regulating power belonging to the knowledge and due exercise of the rites and ceremonial observances. The object of the work was evidently to lay down a series of rules, which should so regulate human action, that all conduct, whether in public or private life, should be brought into harmony with Divine laws and with the precepts of the sages. The innate sense of propriety and the eternal fitness of things were supposed to find expression in this book in such a way as to be practised in daily life, and be made the chief regulator in all social intercourse between all classes of society. However good the theory may have been, the difficulty of having fixed rules not only for great duties but for the simplest affairs of every day was almost insuperable. Eating and drinking, sleeping and walking, laughing and weeping, saluting and leave-taking, questioning and answering, dress and deportment and a host of trivialities which to our eyes appear too small for notice are here treated in full detail. As exemplifying more, perhaps, than any other book the philosophy and ethics of Confucius it is well

worthy of careful study. The book opens with the sentence :—" Always and in everything let there be reverence ;" and in hundreds of passages the same thing is insisted upon—"that ceremony without an inspiring reverence is nothing." The elaborate ceremonies still kept up by the Chinese form a great drawback to progress and free intercourse among themselves and with other nationalities.

**The Ch'un-chiu or Spring and Autumn Annals.**—The object of this work seems to be to give a narration of events in continuation of the *Shu-king*. It extends from the reign of Ping-wang to about the period of the birth of Confucius, or B.C. 722 to 550. With the annals are mixed up censures and criticisms which render it at once a historical and ethical text-book. The title of Spring and Autumn Annals is explained by its commendations being life-giving like the Spring, while its censures are life-withering like the Autumn. The greater portion is most dry and disappointing, without the least literary ability, and full of bare facts without note or comment. So-and-so took place is all it says. No details are entered upon and no opinions are expressed. Were it not for the great reputation of its supposed author and for the Commentary of Tso, one of his younger contemporaries who clothes the dry skeleton with flesh, nothing would have saved it from extinction. Another work by Confucius, called the Book of Music, has been lost.

## 6. HIS TEACHINGS.

**Their influence.**—Confucius is undoubtedly the greatest personage in the largest Empire of the world ; for his teachings have been the great means of making China, with her 400 millions of people, what she is. So prevalent and far-reaching have been their influence that even the Emperor himself has still to attend in full state at the Imperial College in Peking to perform worship to him twice a year. On each occasion he kneels twice and bows his head to the earth six times, when he utters the words :—" Great art thou, O perfect Sage. Thy virtue is full, thy doctrine complete. Among mortal men there has not been thy equal. All kings honour thee. Thy statutes and laws have come gloriously down the ages. Thou art the pattern in the Imperial School. Reverently have the sacrificial vessels been set out. Full of awe we sound our drums and bells." Then follow more praises and particular eulogies. Again, in every city there is a red temple erected, in size proportioned to the importance of the city, at the expense of the government, for his special worship. At stated times every year the Chief

Officers of the city come with great pomp and ceremony to worship him with incense, sacrifices, prayers and bowing to the earth. In every school in China worship is paid to him by master and scholars on the 1st and 15th of each moon, on the day of his birth, and on the opening and closing of the school-work each year. Hundreds of thousands of the literati can repeat every sentence in the classical books, and the masses of the people have hundreds of the Confucian maxims in their memories. His name is on every tongue as "K'ung, the holy man." "The Imperial Ode," which appears in the sacrificial ritual for the temple of the sage, is:—

"Confucius, Confucius, great indeed art thou, O Confucius,  
 "Before thee none like unto thee; after thee none equal to thee,  
 "Confucius, Confucius, great indeed art thou, O Confucius."

**Cause of their power.**—We may well ask what has made Confucius so great and what is it in his teachings that has exercised such immense influence over his countrymen during 24 centuries? Confucianism is not a religion or system of philosophy so much as it is a code of ethics and of political administration. It is the bond that has enabled hundreds of millions of people to be governed from one centre for many centuries by one man. It is the tie that now unites the largest conglomeration of people in the world into one vast though unwieldy Empire. There are those who say that the Chinese Empire has only held together so long because it had not strength to fall to pieces. But those who have studied the subject thoroughly can see in the system of Confucius a wonderful adaptation to the peculiar idiosyncrasy of the Chinese, and ascribe the stability of the nation to this as well as to the peaceable disposition, the intelligence and the industry of the people, to the firmness of their family bonds, and their loyal obedience. Again, we can trace the sources of the strength of this teaching to its historic character, its suitability to Chinese ideals, the excellence of its moral code, and its full recognition of the power of law, of example, of ceremonial and of custom. Judged by appearances the life of Confucius was a failure, but his failure has been infinitely more fruitful than the successes of many other reformers. His aims were very high, and even if he did not nearly reach his ideal he reached a height which makes him stand out at the present day through the dimness of distant ages as a great example, a teacher for all time, the founder of a universal system of morality and good government.

**Where chiefly contained.**—The teachings of Confucius are chiefly gathered from three of the works written by his disciples. First is the *Ta-hsioh* or the Great Learning. Next is the *Chung-yung* or

Doctrine of the Mean ; and lastly is the *Lun-yü* or Confucian Analects which give the sayings or discourses of Confucius.

**Ta-hsioh.**—The argument of the *Ta-hsioh* is briefly summed up under four heads. The improvement of one's self ; the regulation of the family ; the government of the State ; and the rule of the Empire.

**Chung-yung.**—The *Chung-yung* is in some respects the most elaborate treatise in the series. The great purpose of its author is to illustrate the nature of human virtue, and to exhibit its practice in the actions of the ideal *Chün-tsz* or princely superior man of immaculate propriety who always demeans himself correctly without going to extremes. But the sage did not mean to repress active benevolence on the one hand or to encourage selfish stolidity on the other. Men are divided into three classes by Chinese moralists,—those good without instruction, or sages, those good under instruction, or worthies, and those bad in spite of instruction, or worthless.

**Lun-yü.**—The *Lun-yü* is divided into 20 chapters in which the collective body of his disciples record the words and actions of Confucius pretty much in the same way that Boswell did those of Johnson. It contains a great number of aphorisms on various subjects, especially among the dialogues which somewhat resemble the Platonic dialogues. These short pithy sentences cannot be reproduced clearly in any other language. A few translations may, however, be attempted as a specimen.

*On study.*—Study without reflection is waste of time. Reflection without study is dangerous.

*On truth.*—The untruthful man is like a chariot without an axle.

*On fame.*—Do not repine at obscurity, but seek to deserve fame.

*On speaking and acting.*—Be slow in speech but prompt in action.

*On caution.*—The cautious are generally found on the right side.

*On self-sacrifice.*—He that is truly good and great seeks not to preserve his life at the expense of virtue.

*On reproof.*—If you would escape vexation reprove yourself liberally and others sparingly.

*On precept and example.*—The superior man practices before he preaches.

*The golden rule.*—Do not unto others what thou wouldst not they should do unto thee.

In a similar manner political subjects are often found brought within the limits of a precept, as, for example :—"The decrees of Heaven are "not immutable, for though a throne may be gained by virtue it may be

"lost by vice." "A good Sovereign is like the pole star which forms the centre round which all the other stars revolve."

The last portion of these Dialogues is so illustrative of the mode of Confucius' teaching that a notice of it cannot well be omitted.

On being questioned how a good government could be best established, he said :—

"There are five good principles of action to be adopted and four bad principles of action to be avoided.

"*To be adopted.*—To benefit others without being lavish ; to encourage labour without being harsh ; to add to your resources without being covetous ; to be dignified without being superstitious ; and to inspire awe without being austere.

"*To be avoided.*—Cruelty, tyranny, rapacity, meanness."

Each of these nine points he explained at some length.

**Their object.**—The great object of the Confucian writings seems to have been to bring back again the golden age of the past. Then the rulers of China loved virtue and the people listened to their instructions, imitated their examples and observed the rules of propriety attached by nature and the words of the sages to every station and relation of life. Confucius was a simple, earnest-minded man, an enquirer, a seeker after truth, a searcher after the right or the Divine way ; and it was when he thought he had found that way, that he became untiring in his efforts to induce others to walk in it. It was this wish to share with others that which he conceived to be the best, which sets such a special stamp upon his teaching ; and it is through this that he has established such a lasting claim on the gratitude of his fellow-countrymen, and caused himself to be held in such high honour, not only as a teacher but as a benefactor. The religion he taught was no new one. He believed that man's nature is good, and if followed will invariably lead him right. He regarded the early Sovereigns or the sages of antiquity as the highest exponents upon earth of Divine perfection. By honouring them and teaching the people to honour them, his name has become so intimately associated with theirs that he has become their representative, and the purity of his character has been made to overshadow theirs.

Hence, he is now called "the pattern for ages," the representative of the Divine qualities that man most needs, and is honoured as the chief of all the sages, or the one great holy man of the past.

**Their successes and failures.**—As a *political* and *educational system*, Confucianism has been in past ages a success. It has made China the most uniform, the most closely compacted and the most



conservative nation in the world. The pivot of its educational system was a saying of one of the old kings :—"The Supreme Ruler has "conferred on the people a moral sense, compliance with which would "show their natures invariably right. To cause them tranquilly to "pursue the course it indicates is the task of the Sovereign." In a word, virtue in the rulers and instruction from them is all that is necessary to secure virtue in the people. Hence education in China is made to lie at the very foundation of government, and it has permeated Chinese society for centuries, so that in the system of competitive government China is in advance of all other countries. As a *religious system* Confucianism has failed, by making its teachings begin and end in man only and in ignoring God. Among the permanent elements of every religion there ought to be dependence on and fellowship with God, combined with facilities for progress. Its failure in this respect left a vacuum which Buddhism and Taoism have stepped in and tried in vain to fill. As a *system of philosophy* Confucianism has much that is commendable, but has hardly attained that essential feature which SCHLEGEL, in his Philosophy of History, calls "the restoration of the lost "image of God so far as this relates to science. When this restoration "in the eternal consciousness is fully understood and really brought "about, the object of pure philosophy will be attained." It is manifestly unfair to point to the evils existing in China and charge them to Confucianism. We generally suppose that the Chinese are a cruel, untruthful, dishonest people, devoid of any fine sense of honour, immersed in material self-seeking, caring little for a higher life, tolerators of infanticide, and inveterate smokers of opium. Much of this is only too true, yet not *because* of the Confucian teachings, but *despite* of them. There are good as well as bad Chinamen. It would be as unfair to attribute the whole category of similar crimes and evils existing in Christendom to the teaching of Christianity. We may fairly ask what would China have been without Confucianism if she is so bad with it? This is only the same sort of question as is often asked respecting our own countries and Christianity.

**Their future prospects.**—Dr. LEGGE, the greatest authority on the Confucian teachings, sums up the character of Confucius as follows :—"I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not "before his age, though he was above the mass of the officers and scholars "of his time. He threw no new light on any of the questions which "have a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had "no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will

"henceforth wane. My opinion is that the faith of the nation in him "will speedily and extensively pass away." On the other hand, we must remember that these writings and recorded thoughts of Confucius have been the only standard of life and morals of the countless myriads of a mighty Empire for two thousand years. Dynasties have been changed over and over again. New religions have been introduced. Tartar conquerors have seized the Imperial power. The teachings have permeated every portion of the Chinese Empire and its dependencies, as well as Japan and Corea. Up to the present time the supremacy obtained by this "throneless king," this orphan son of the old prefect of Tsow-yi, is as firmly established as ever, and shows no signs of immediate decay. It is an interesting thought that one small brain should have produced such a great and lasting work, and it is difficult to refrain from sharing with the Chinese the admiration and veneration with which they regard Confucius and the Confucian teachings.

**Their place among the teachings of other religions.**—What then is the place of Confucius among the great teachers of the world? There was no mystery or concealment or symbolism about any of his sayings or doings. When questioned about a future state he flatly acknowledged his ignorance. He founded no new religion, and thus has no claim to be considered in common with Buddha or Zoroaster or Mahomet; for these all destroyed in greater or less degree the social and religious systems which preceded them, and founded new religions on their ruins. The Mission of Confucius was neither to destroy nor to create, but to restore and preserve. He was no law-giver like Moses, but he sought to fulfil the laws of "them of old time" like Jesus Christ. He was far removed from Pythagoras, and there is little in common between him and Plato or Socrates. The solitary grandeur of his character has been recognised by the poet POPE in these lines :—

"Superior and alone Confucius stood  
"Who taught that useful lesson, to be good."

Other religions make use of the hope of future reward or deliverance from punishment as their incentive to virtue. Confucius only calls for that conduct which is based on a sense of duty. It is this highest level which Christendom is still endeavouring with more or less success to give prominence to.

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## Part III.

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### LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF THE CHIEF CONFUCIAN FOLLOWERS.

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#### 1. MENCIUS.

**His parentage and early life.**—Mencius, who ranks next to Confucius as a great teacher and philosopher, lived about a century and a half after the death of that sage. He was a descendant of a noble family of Lü, the same state of which Confucius was a native. But few details of his personal history have been preserved. He was left an orphan in childhood by the death of his father, but was educated with tender yet wise solicitude by his mother. She thrice changed her abode in order to guard him from hurtful influences. Having dwelt at first near a cemetery, and again near a market where the boy was led to mimic the scenes he saw enacted, she was not content till she found a home adjacent to a school, where he began to imitate the ceremonial rites and polite observances which formed part of the instruction of his seniors. As an instance of his mother's regard for truth: the child one day saw a pig being killed and asked her why it was done. Her reply was "that you might have some pork to eat." Remembering, however, that she had no intention of giving him any, and fearing he might think he had been deceived, she went and bought some for him. On another occasion, Mencius returned from school earlier than usual when his mother, who was weaving, asked what he had been learning. He answered:—"Oh, anything I like." To give him an effective object-lesson she took a knife and cut asunder the woof she was weaving, saying:—"What you are doing is like that—work that leads to nothing. You must study steadily and continuously or you will have to take service in some menial capacity instead of enjoying riches and honour." The lesson had the desired effect, and he pursued his studies with such diligence that he became a great scholar.

**His public life.**—On attaining years of discretion Mencius enrolled himself among the disciples of one of the best teachers of the

Confucian system, under whom he studied with great success. Later on he sought to teach the doctrines of Confucius in the same way that sage had done, by taking service under several of the feudal princes and endeavouring to induce them to act in conformity with the principles of good government. Wandering about from place to place his successes were so small, that he eventually retired into private life, devoting himself to literature and gathering around him a number of disciples by whom his teachings were handed down to posterity. He was willing to stand before the world as an imitator rather than an originator. As a political reformer his life was as great a failure as was that of Confucius, but he did not labour in vain as a teacher, and he occupies a place in the minds of his countrymen second only to that of the great sage. He died in the 94th year of his age, and was buried by the side of his mother. Sacrifices are still offered twice a year before his tomb by Imperial orders, and his descendants receive Imperial pensions.

**His teachings.**—The discourses of Mencius form the last of the Four Books. They are written in a style similar to the Dialogues of Confucius. The first part opens with an interview between Mencius and one of the feudal princes, King Hui of Liang. At the close of the interview the remarks of Mencius were to this effect :—“Do not allow yourself “ to speak of mere personal or political advantages. Justice and benevolence “ are all in all. Let them suffice as objects to be sought after rather than “ material prosperity.” On many occasions he spoke in such a straightforward fearless manner as to quickly brush away the specious arguments of those who did not agree with him, so that it is sometimes difficult to know which to admire the most, the courage of the philosopher or the forbearance of the princes or his disciples addressed. As an example of his clever manner of illustration, he was once speaking of men’s motives, and said :—“Men may be equally good and actuated by the same motives, “ though at first sight it might seem as if the ends they had in view were “ entirely different. For instance, the maker of armour and the maker of “ arrows are widely apart in their aims, the one seeking to save life and the “ other to destroy it. Yet both are influenced by the desire to succeed in “ their occupations : one wishing to make armour which cannot be “ penetrated and the other to make arrows which can pierce everything.”

**The object of his teachings.**—The object of all his teachings seem to have been to emphasize the lessons of Confucius and to spread the greatest amount of happiness among the greatest number of the people. He indulges in no speculations as to future life or rewards and punishments, but traces all good gifts to Heaven and all natural laws to an

expression of the Divine will. His two pet theories were that the nature of man is good, and that the people can be led in any given direction, but cannot be made to understand the reason why. "The true service of Heaven," he says, "is the right cultivation of the heart and nature!" "Every heart," according to him, "has the germ of perfection within and " only falls short of it by not taking full advantage of opportunities, or " by missing them. Man has the power of choice in himself." Mencius gives as the greatest of all the qualities of a sage that of "being a helper to others in right living." By some, Mencius is regarded as the greatest teacher China has produced, not even excepting Confucius; especially in what he asserts as the rights of humanity in general, even to revolting against evil rulers; and in the definiteness and practicability of his plans for reformation.

## 2. CHU-HSI.

**His parentage and early life.**—Chu-hsi or Chu-foo-tsz, was a follower of Confucius who flourished during the Sung Dynasty, and is regarded as the greatest among the later Chinese philosophers. He was born in the little village of Yao-ki in the Fukien province, A.D. 1130. His father, a native of the province of An-hui, was in official employ, and died when Chu-hsi was 14 years of age. Chu-hsi displayed the signs of a precocious intellect in early childhood, and carried out his father's wishes by applying himself so assiduously to his studies that he passed his examination for the third degree before reaching 20 years of age. Receiving a small official appointment he devoted himself for several years to a careful study of Buddhism and Taoism. These religions, however, gave him no permanent satisfaction and at 24 years of age he abandoned them in disgust for a deeper study of the Confucian classics. He threw himself with all his ardour into the work of criticism and exposition in connection with the new light which had been thrown upon them by the schoolmen of the earlier part of the Sung Dynasty, and especially by the famous scholars Chow-tun-i and the brothers Ch'eng, with their disciples.

**His official life.**—While holding different provincial offices he pursued his metaphysical speculations so diligently that his wide reputation reached the ears of the emperor. He was several times summoned to the Court and consulted as an adviser in literary and political matters. In 1180, when 50 years of age, he was appointed to the Governorship of Nan-k'ang in the modern Kiangsi province where, by

applying the principles of paternal government laid down by Confucius, he soon improved the condition of the public morals. While Governor of this place he built for himself a retreat in the hills near the Po-yang lake called the "White Deer Grotto," where he retired for intervals of meditation. His favour with the emperor stirred up the jealousy and animosity of various officials who tried to bring him into disrepute. Accusation after accusation was brought against him, so that in 1196 his official positions and rank were taken from him. Three years afterwards he was restored to favour. His friends and disciples remained faithful to him during his reverses. He died in 1200.

**His metaphysical speculations.**—Chu-hsi has left behind him three principal works that have been handed down with great reverence and respect to the present time. The first is his reconstruction and condensation of the great historical work of Sze-Ma-kwang, adding to it large and important commentaries. His fame is, however, still more closely connected with his next work embodying many chapters of metaphysical speculations or Mental Philosophy. In these he elucidates the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius with reference to the nature of men, the origin of good and evil, and the principles of creation. He maintains that the nature of man is originally good, and sought to explain the source and prevalence of evil. His speculations have been almost universally received, and to the present day this work is the great authority on metaphysical subjects. Its chapters treat of the Cosmic evolution, mind and matter, the great extreme, the dual principles, the Heaven-father and earth-mother, spontaneous generation, the nature of man, his perfectability, souls and spirits, life and death, etc. etc.

**His ideas on Cosmic evolution.**—To illustrate his ideas on Cosmic evolution, which closely resemble those of the Hindoos or of Buddhism, it may be mentioned that the eternity of matter is his fundamental dogma. Every great period of 129,600 years or Hindoo Kalpa, the evolution from Chaos and the involution or return to Chaos, are enacted. This great period is divided into 12 lesser periods of 10,800 years each. First comes that of the separation of the heavens from Chaos: next that of the separation of the earth. The third is the creation of man. The affairs of the human race go on period after period till they reach their meridian, after which they begin to decline till Chaos comes again. Thus all history literally repeats itself every 129,600 years, even down to the minute details, and there is nothing new, for everything now in existence is exactly a repetition of what there was one Kalpa ago, or any given number of Kalpas ago.

**His views on the "great extreme."**—As a specimen of Chu-hsi's philosophy, he reasons on the "great extreme" (or *t'ai-chi*) as follows :—"Under the whole heaven there is no primary matter (*li*) " without the immaterial principle (*ch'i*) and no immaterial principle apart " from primary matter. Primary matter consists of the five elements of " metal, earth, wood, water and fire, while the immaterial principle is no " other than the five cardinal virtues of benevolence, righteousness, " propriety, wisdom and sincerity. The great extreme is merely the " immaterial principle, and because of its extending to the extreme limit " is therefore called the great extreme. It has neither residence, nor form, " nor place which you can assign to it. It is simply the principle of " extreme goodness and extreme perfection. Every man has a great " extreme, every thing has one. It is simply the extreme point, beyond " which no one can go. From the time of Confucius no one has been able " to grasp the full idea of the 'great extreme.'" It might be added, " No one will ever be able to grasp it." Yet such discussions have occupied the minds and pens of Chinese metaphysicians for many centuries. One after another they continue to roll this stone of Sisyphus until they become hopelessly fatigued and bewildered.

**His commentaries on the classics.**—His third work is his commentaries on the classical writings. These have formed the standard of orthodoxy for many centuries, and are almost always printed and studied with the text of the classics. They have often been severely attacked, but they still maintain their ground and the Imperial approbation. It will be seen from the above three works what an immense influence Chu-hsi has exercised upon the nation, and how much Confucianism owes to him as its exponent in rendering the study of the classics intelligible and practicable for so many generations.

### 3. OTHER IMPORTANT FOLLOWERS OF CONFUCIUS.

**Tsêng-shên.**—There were four of the disciples of Confucius who have been called the four *pei* or "Assessors" of the sage. Mencius, who was the chief of them, has already been described. Of the remaining three, Tsêng-shên is regarded as the most important. He became the expositor of his master's doctrines, and a portion of the *Ta-hsioh* or "Great Learning" is attributed to him. He is held up as one of the great examples of filial piety, and numerous incidents are given illustrating this feature in his character. When a boy, he was once gathering firewood among the hills. His mother, suddenly requiring his presence, bit her

finger. The youth at once felt a twinge of pain and, surmising that his mother wanted him, hurried home to enquire what was the matter.

**Yen-hui.**—The favourite disciple of Confucius was Yen-hui, one of his Lin-men. His wisdom and keenness of perception surpassed those of his fellow pupils. At the age of 29 his hair had grown white, and at 32 he died. Although a most earnest student, he owes his great reputation chiefly to his close connection with Confucius. He is described by the historian Sz-Ma-ch'ien as "a fly clinging to the tail of a swift horse," thereby, in a homely phrase, which has become proverbial, showing the cause of his brilliant reputation.

**Tsz-sze.**—The grandson of Confucius was named Tsz-sze, and also K'ung-ki. He was noted as an exponent of the teachings of his grandfather. Born about 500 B.C., he lived to the age of 62, but some writers say he lived upwards of a century. His mind was strongly developed in philosophical subjects, and he is author of the *Chung-ying* or "Doctrine of the Mean," one of the chief Confucian writings, which embodies the ethics of the sage in their highest form.

**Tsz-lu.**—Confucius highly extolled the wisdom of one of his disciples known as Tsz-lu, or Chung-yin. His devotion to learning continued throughout a long career of official duties, and his loss was greatly lamented by the sage when he fell in battle in an attempt to suppress a rebellion. In the midst of his honours he remembered his parents with so much affection that he is classed among the noted examples of filial piety. One of his sayings is recorded as follows:—"In the days of my poverty I carried ice on my back to earn the means for supporting those who gave me birth, and now, although I would gladly do so again to have them with me, I cannot, alas, recall them to life."

**Wang-ch'ung.**—Wang-chung was one of the most original and judicious of all the metaphysicians China has ever produced. Although a follower of Confucius he exposed the exaggerations with which the orthodox learned classes had corrupted the teaching of the sage. This brought him into disrepute, but in spite of poverty and the large portion of his time spent in performing the duties of petty offices, he wrote various works, among which is one called "Critical Disquisitions," in which he handles mental and physical problems in a style and with a boldness which have not their equal in Chinese literature.

**Ch'êng-hao and Ch'êng-i.**—Two of the noted schoolmen of the Sung Dynasty were the brothers Ch'êng-hao and Ch'êng-i. The former was a great scholar and commentator, and as an exponent of the laws of morality was only second to Mencius. The latter has won great



literary fame. His criticisms on the classics opened a new era in Chinese philosophy and were largely adopted by his great successor, Chu-li.

**Views as to man's original nature.**—The chief point of difference of opinion among the various followers of Confucius consists in their views respecting the original nature of man. While Mencius and others, on the one hand, emphatically claim that man is originally virtuous and becomes vicious only as he falls away from his pristine purity, Sün-tsz and his adherents, on the other hand, insist that man's nature is originally evil, that he only becomes virtuous through a course of discipline and experience. A third school, such as Sze-yuan, affirm that man has the two opposite qualities of good and evil blended together in varied proportions. According to whichever one gains the ascendancy so is he to be considered a virtuous, or a vicious person.

#### 4. THE SACRED EDICT OF K'ANG-HSI.

This edict is an expression of the main points in the Confucian system as it now exists in China, and was issued by the Emperor K'ang-hsi about 200 years ago, and is accompanied by an exposition or amplification by Yung-ching, the son and successor of K'ang-hsi. The text is written in 16 sentences, each consisting of seven words. On the 1st and 16th of each month the civil and military officers of every city are supposed to meet in a public hall for the purpose of reading and expounding this Edict and its Commentary to the people, so that they may be well-informed as to the principles of morality and good government. The 16 texts may be translated as follows :—

- 1.—Pay just regard to filial and fraternal duties, in order to give due importance to the relations of life.
- 2.—Respect kindred, in order to display the excellence of harmony.
- 3.—Let concord abound among those who dwell in the same neighbourhood, thereby preventing litigations.
- 4.—Give the chief place to husbandry and the culture of the mulberry, that adequate supplies of food and raiment be secured.
- 5.—Esteem economy, that money be not lavishly wasted.
- 6.—Magnify academical learning, in order to advance the scholar's progress.
- 7.—Degrade strange religions, in order to exalt the orthodox doctrines.
- 8.—Explain the laws, in order to warn the ignorant and obstinate.
- 9.—Illustrate the principles of a polite and yielding deportment, in order to improve manners.

- 10.—Attend to the essential employments, in order to give unvarying determination to the will of the people.
- 11.—Instruct the youth, in order to restrain them from evil.
- 12.—Suppress all false accusing, in order to secure protection to the innocent.
- 13.—Warn those who hide deserters, that they may not be involved in their downfall.
- 14.—Promptly and fully pay taxes in order to prevent frequent urging for payment.
- 15.—Unite the Pao (10 chia) and the Chia (10 families), in order to prevent robbery and theft.
- 16.—Settle animosities that lives may be duly valued.



## Part IV.

### LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF LAO-TSZ.

#### 1. ORIGIN AND EARLY LIFE.

**Historical and mythical records.**—The life of Lao-tsz, the founder of Taoism, is enveloped in considerable mystery. There are, however, two kinds of statements respecting him, the reliable and the legendary. It may be well to treat them separately. Beside the notices of him in the Confucian classics, we have the brief account which has come down from the historian Sz-Ma-chien, and occasional references to him in other old standard books, all more or less reliable. The history given of him in the "Records of Spirits and Fairies," as well as other books, of a similar class is so evidently a tissue of falsehoods that it is rejected by all sensible Chinese scholars, and even by most of the Taoists themselves.

**Birth and early years.**—Lao-tsz was born in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Ting, the 23rd sovereign of the Dynasty

of Chow, or B.C. 604. The place of his nativity was the hamlet of Ch'ü-jên in the parish of Li in the district of K'u. This district is near the present Kwei-tê-foo, the most easterly of the cities of Honan. His parents are said to have been very poor peasants, his father being 70 years of age and his mother 40 years when they were married. In his youth he was only known by his family name of Li, with the honorific addition of Poo-yang; but in his early childhood he was called Erh, meaning "ears," because it is supposed there was some peculiarity in the shape of his ears. Some say he was called Chung-erh, or "heavy ears," on account of their unusual size and shape. His name of Lao-tsz means the "old boy," or the "ancient master." How he spent his youth is purely a matter of speculation. We know, however, that he must have been endowed with more than ordinary intelligence, combined with all the advantages which belong to a good education, because we first read of him as Registrar or Historiographer at the Imperial Court of the Chow Dynasty, at the city of Lo-yang. There seems to have been a sort of museum at this place, of which Lao-tsz was probably also the custodian or officer in charge. It was here that Confucius afterwards saw the portraits of the ancient kings and the other relics of antiquity which impressed him so strongly with the idea of the magnificence of the first princes of the dynasty. The influence of this Institution and its associations, in moulding the mind of Lao-tsz, must have been considerable.

**Legendary account of Lao-tsz.**—A few out of the many legends that are to be found in Taoist and other literature respecting Lao-tsz may prove interesting, as showing the popular conception of him. Some writers represent Lao-tsz as a spiritual being, eternal and self-existing, manifesting himself in a human form on the earth at various times and under various names. One author gives this as a statement made by Lao-tsz himself. According to the "Records of Spirits and Fairies" he was not born until 72 years, some say 81 years, after his conception, and that from his coming into the world under a *Li*, or plum-tree, he was named Li. At his birth he had the appearance of an old man, and his hair was already gray, so that he was called the "old boy." He could speak immediately on being born. Each ear terminated in a point and had three passages. He had large eyes and eyebrows, double-ridged nose, square mouth and thick lips. His hands had ornamental inscriptions on them and the soles of his feet had representations of the mysterious numbers two and five, the former representing heaven and the latter earth. He pointed with his

left hand to heaven and with his right hand to earth, saying :—"In "Heaven above and on earth beneath there is only one Tao that is "worthy of honour." Some writers say he was living as far back as the time of the establishment of the Chow Dynasty and took service under Wu-wang, so that he must have lived to be over 500 years old. But it is useless to follow these legends further, because similar things are reputed of Buddha and other great founders of religions.

**Comparison with events in the west.**—A comparison of dates showing what was going on in other countries at the period when Lao-tsz flourished will be interesting as well as useful, because without such assistance it is difficult to realize how many years he was in advance of the great sages and philosophers of other lands. Lao-tsz was born 55 years before Confucius, and 35 before Pythagoras; whilst he preceded Heraclitus, Plato, Protagoras, Anaxagoras, and Socrates by nearly two centuries. He was contemporary with the seven sages of Greece; and Rome was then only in its infancy. In Babylonia Nebuchadnezzar was subjugating Judea, destroying Jerusalem and annihilating the Egyptian power in Asia. Nineveh was razed to the ground before Lao-tsz was born, while three years later Daniel, according to the old authorities, interpreted dreams and advanced in honour and power, Ezekiel gave the allegorical illustrations of his prophetic visions, Pharaoh Necho had just failed to connect the waters of the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and Sakya Muni was beginning to lay the foundation of Buddhism in India.

## 2. CHIEF EVENTS OF HIS LIFE.

**His official life and studies.**—Lao-tsz laboured the greater part of his life at Lo-yang, but the exact positions he occupied, although they cannot now be accurately determined, must have been of a high and responsible character. There were seven official posts of the same designation, each having its separate function clearly defined. Perhaps at the commencement of his career he may have been attached to more than one of them. That he had not wasted his opportunities of study and research is evident from the frequent quotations from the old writers that are introduced by him into his one book, the *Tao-tê-king*. When we remember the changes in form and value of the characters in the documents he had to consult, and the unsatisfactory nature of the material they were written upon—leaves, strips of bamboo or wood, pieces of silk or linen,—the labour of study and of preserving the library

must have been enormous. It is supposed by some people that many of the lofty ideas of Lao-tsz were inspired by the writings to which he had access, and by information which had been received from India, or Assyria or Babylon. Indeed, some authorities go so far as to say that he must have travelled to the Far West to gain such a knowledge of a great over-ruling First Cause as he promulgates in the pages of the *Tao-tê-king*. At any rate, his fame as a scholar and teacher was very wide-spread in China.

**His conference with Confucius.**—It is said by some writers that Confucius in his earlier years had been a pupil of Lao-tsz, and always remembered him with affection and respect. There is no reliable proof, however, that Lao-tsz was ever his teacher in the usual sense of the term. Perhaps Confucius had already been on his missionary tours, trying to convert the people from their evil ways to the good old paths of primitive virtue, when he came to visit Lao-tsz to tell the sorrowful tale of his disappointment and want of success, and to ask for his instruction and advice. The conversation reported between the two philosophers seems to countenance this view. At any rate they were afterwards on terms of intimate friendship. Confucius accepted his reproofs with meekness and submission. He quotes Lao-tsz's opinions as sufficient answer to a question of one of his own disciples. To the quiet mind of Lao-tsz the conduct of Confucius in parading the Empire followed by a crowd of disciples, going from Court to Court, scolding and admonishing its chiefs to keep strictly to the old paths, appeared to be the height of folly, and to call for the sharp reproof and earnest warning which was administered.

**His retirement from the Capital.**—It is impossible to find out exactly why and when Lao-tsz retired from office and how long he afterwards remained in seclusion in the State of Chow. The unsettled condition of the country at that period has already been described when treating of the life of Confucius. We can easily understand why he taught that the philosopher should never strive, but ever give way; that he should be satisfied with a low condition; that men of virtue and integrity should retire from the dangers and vices of a wicked government. True to his principles, he therefore withdrew from the Court. It is clear that only two courses were open to him. The first was to try by increasingly strong measures to call the rulers back to the paths of virtue as Confucius had attempted to do, meeting with nothing but disappointment; or else to leave them to their own devices, which he afterwards elected to do.

**His writing of the Taoist classic.**—Quitting the capital and proceeding westward, he intended to go through the Han-ku Pass or barrier, and wander in other states. The keeper of the Pass, Yin-hsi, recognized him, and detained him till, becoming a disciple, he had learned all about the *Tao*. He then induced Lao-tsz to write down the principles of the *Tao*, which he did in a beautiful composition of only a little over 5,000 characters, called the *Tao-té-king* which is all of his writings that has been handed down.

**His disappearance.**—Bidding farewell to the keeper of the Pass, a legend states that he mounted a cloud and soared out of sight in the dazzling glare of a bright light away into the ethereal regions, to his former home in the heavens, promising to return after a thousand days. One writer says he travelled westward and became incarnate as Gotama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. This is evidently an attempt on the part of Taoists to make their leader equal if not superior to Buddha. We are told, however, in the works of the Taoist writer, Chwang-tsz, who lived between the 4th and 3rd century B.C., that on the occasion of the death of Lao-tsz one of his disciples visited the house of mourning, and the details of the visit are given. This effectively destroys the legends, and shows that Lao-tsz died a natural death in a district outside the State of Chow. The date of his death is given as B.C. 523, and his age is reported as 81 years. According to the historian Sz-Ma-chien he left a son named Ts'ung, who became a high military officer under the chief of Wei, and was appointed to the feudal dependancy of Tuan-kan. His descendants were living in the time of the Han Dynasty, in the 2nd century B.C.

### 3. HIS CHARACTER.

**His character.**—Both in his birth and in his death there was much mystery, and all through his life he seems to have courted obscurity. He tells us that to his fellow-men he appeared stupid and helpless, but that he had within himself precious treasures of which the world did not know. To the candid observer he gives the impression of being on the whole a great philosopher of a kind heart and gentle disposition, who thought more of what was beyond this world than about what was in it; of the Great Cause rather than of the objects of creation; of the virtues and possibilities rather than the vices and degeneracy of mankind. Some have found in him traits of moroseness and cynicism, while others have thought there was a certain amount of jealousy and spite in his

feeling towards Confucius ; but there is no ground for such inferences, and he never even alluded to Confucius, directly or indirectly. Chu-hsi represents him as a man standing aloof from the ordinary ways of men, loving neither their sounds nor their sights, and not caring for official life. His self-depreciation seems to have been extreme. He held three things as most precious, *viz.*, compassion, frugality and humility. In his wide range and originality of thought he is above most if not all the sages of the Oriental world. In teaching that goodness was to be manifested equally to the good and evil, and faithfulness to the faithful and unfaithful, he rose beyond every teacher of the East except the founder of Christianity.

#### 4. THE TAOIST CLASSIC OR TAO-TÊ-KING.

**Its name.**—The word *Tao* is used in very many different ways, and with a wide range of meanings. In the *Tao-tê-king* it has at least five different senses. 1. The way or means of doing anything. 2. To speak of or describe. 3. The course pursued by Heaven, earth and the perfect man, both literal and figurative. 4. Good principles or truth. 5. The transcendental use of the word, as adopted by Lao-tsz, for an undefinable nameless power or influence which, though translated by various authorities as Reason, or *Logos*, is perhaps nearer to our idea of God than anything else. The word *tê* means virtue, and is usually thus translated, but virtue very inadequately expresses its signification in this classic. Sometimes it seems almost synonymous with *Tao*, and has functions assigned to it. If we regard *Tao* as the great or Universal Nature, or God, then *tê* is the particular Nature with which God endows his rational creatures. This nature is originally spontaneous, and acts without effort or consciousness of goodness. It is only when vice begins to exist that virtue becomes difficult, and its excellencies are hard to attain, and when attained hard to retain. Then virtue becomes conscious excellence. One writer regards *Tao* as the law and *tê* as the fruit or manifestation of the law.

This classic was originally called “Hwang-Lao,” or the combined teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Lao-tsz. The Yellow Emperor lived about B.C. 2600, and some parts of the *Tao-tê-king* are ascribed to him. Another title by old authors is *Lao-tsz-shu*, or the writing of Lao-tsz. It was not till the time of the Emperor Wên of the Han Dynasty, B.C. 160, that we find the name *Tao-tê* used. The work seems to have been originally in two parts. The first word of the first part is

*Tao*, and the first important word of the second part is *Tê*. The whole of the Chinese classics are named in this way from their first words. In the 8th century of our era the first part was called the *Tao-king*, and the second part the *Tê-king*; but now the two words are combined to form the name *Tao-tê*. The term *king* means classic, and is added by way of respect.

A recent translator of this work makes God as the equivalent of *Tao* when used in the transcendental sense, and makes "virtue of" or "nature of" as the equivalent of *Tê*. He thus makes *Tao-tê-king* to mean "Thoughts on the manifestations of God." This would throw quite a new light on the meaning of the whole book and make parts of it quite intelligible, if not sublime, that before were the most obscure.

**Its divisions.**—The work was originally divided into two parts, but these were afterwards subdivided into chapters. The number of the chapters varies considerably in different editions. Some editors make only 55, some 64, some 68, some 72. But the most usual number is 81, and this is on the authority of an old writer, Ho-shan-king, of the Han Dynasty, the ablest expositor of Lao-tsz's book. It may be remarked that the Taoists are very fond of the number 3 and its multiples, and 81 is associated with the tradition of Lao-tsz's birth and the years of his life. Each chapter has a title consisting of two characters. The titles ascribed to Ho-shan-king give an epitome of the chapters; but many editors reject these and use the first two words of each chapter as its title, in the usual Chinese method.

**Its style.**—The style of the *Tao-tê-king* is the most terse and concise that can be employed. There is little, if any, grace or elegance about it; and most of the chapters seem to be merely texts or notes for philosophical discourses. They are composed of short and sometimes enigmatical or paradoxical sentences,—not in verse as some have supposed—and with a connexion either very slight or else not at all perceptible. Much of the difficulty doubtless arises from the antiquity of the language and uncertainty about the proper rendering; but much is also due to the brief, enigmatical manner in which the author has expressed himself. Many Chinese regard the style as profound and suggestive, and so no doubt it is. Some editors have cut out all characters that can possibly be dispensed with so as to keep the number as little as possible beyond 5,000. Others have added characters here and there to make out a meaning which they think the writer intended. Again, it must be borne in mind that the nature of the subjects discussed contributes to the difficulty of finding suitable terms. The minds of thoughtful men in all ages have been puzzled to express their ideas on the origin of the universe,



man's place and destiny as an individual, a member of society, and a conscious part of nature. They are ideas difficult of elucidation in any language, and much more when expressed in a language which was crude and imperfect and only in its infancy.

**Selection of passages.**—The following passages have been selected to illustrate some of the beauties of this classic :—

*Chapter 1* may be translated as follows :—

“God (the great, everlasting, infinite First Cause from whom all things in heaven and earth proceed) can neither be defined nor named.

“For that phase of the Godhead which can be defined or named is but the Creator, the Great Mother of all those things of which our senses have cognizance.

“Now he who would gain a knowledge of the nature and attributes of the nameless and undefinable God must first set himself free from all earthly desires, for unless he can do this he will be unable to penetrate the material veil which interposes between him and those spiritual conditions into which he would obtain an insight.

“Yet the spiritual and the material, though known to us under different names, are similar in origin, and issue from the same source, and the same obscurity belongs to both ; for deep indeed is the darkness that enshrines the portals through which we have to pass, in order to gain the knowledge of these mysteries.”

Thus did Lao-tsz seek to penetrate the mysteries of God, of creation and of existence ;—with one straight flight reaching as far as man can know of God, intellectually, and realising the difference between those who penetrate behind the veil of physical nature and those who are dominated by physical nature. These few sentences are sufficient to show that Lao-tsz was indeed a master philosopher, though struggling to express a conception which he could hardly define and which necessarily transcended his powers ; struggling, moreover, to speak in a language too stiff and inelastic for such a lofty purpose.

*Chapter 4.*—“God is immaterial, and it is out of the immaterial that he has created all things. Though we know him not in his fulness, yet how deep and profound he seems as he stands before us, the Great Universal Progenitor, who—

“Blunts the sharp points ; sets in order the tangles ;

“Attenuates the light ; brings the actions together.

“Oh, how pure and perfect he is as he stands before us as the Great Everlasting Preserver.”

*Chapter 11.*—"The vase moulded out of clay would be useless but for the empty space left for its contents. The door and window frames of a house would be useless but for the empty spaces they enclose, which permit of ingress and egress, and the admission of light and air. This teaches us that however beneficial the material may be to us, yet without the immaterial it would be useless."

*Chapter 20.*—"The mass of the people thrive and enjoy themselves like cattle in a rich pasture, and are as happy as he who stands on an elevated terrace in spring. But I, alas! am as a solitary ship at anchor on an unknown shore—like an infant before it has advanced to the maturity of childhood. I stand alone amidst an innumerable host living as if there were no return to the state from which they came. Why do I thus differ from others and stand alone? It is because I honour and revere God—the Great Mother—to whom we owe our being and all that supports life."

*Chapter 21.*—"The supreme good as manifested to us is an emanation from God—the creative principle of God. In the beginning there was naught but chaos. Oh, how wild! Oh, how obscure it was! Then out of its midst came forth forms! Oh, how wild! Oh, how obscure it was! Out of its midst came material objects. Oh! the stillness! Oh, the darkness! Oh, the stillness! Out of its midst came forth the forms of life,—perfect in subtlety. Out of its midst came consciousness, so that from then till now the knowledge of all this remains, and we are enabled to see all this that has happened in the world pass in review before us."

*Chapter 66.*—"Why do the oceans and great rivers exercise a supremacy over the water-channels and streams? It is because the oceans and great rivers stand at a lower level, and hence the rivulets and streams are compelled to become their tributaries. In like manner the sage, when he wishes to dominate over a people, is careful to speak humbly to them. When he wishes to lead he keeps himself in the background, and by so doing he gains his end without having created a feeling amongst the people that they have been either injured or oppressed: thus the spirit of disobedience has no place and the Empire is filled with joy. Himself avoiding all strife, how is it possible for others to contend with him?"

*Chapter 81.*—"The language of truth is not always elegant, whilst well-turned phrases often lack truth.

"A good man may not use choice words, but he who does so may not be good.

"A wise man may not be erudite, whilst he who has erudition may not be wise.

"The superior man does not garner up all his knowledge; hence he is able to help others, and the more he gives out of his own store the more there will remain.

"The principle upon which Heaven acts is to benefit all and injure none.

"The principle upon which the superior man acts is to avoid being contentious."

## 5. GENERAL VIEW OF LAO-TSZ'S TEACHINGS.

**Opinion of Chu-hsi.**—Chu-hsi in his collected writings, chapter 58, says :—"Lao-tsz's scheme of philosophy consists in modesty, self-emptiness, the saving of one's powers, and the refusal in all circumstances to agitate the bodily humours and spirits. Lao-tsz's learning consists, generally speaking, in being void of desires, quiet and free from exertion—in being self-empty, retiring, and self-controlling in actual life. Accordingly, what his words are ever inculcating is to have in outward deportment a gentle tenderness and modesty, and to be at the core void of all selfishness and unhurtful to all things in the world."

**Opinion of Van Strauss.**—The main feature of the philosophy of Lao-tsz is that Tao originated all things, is the everlasting ruler or upholder of all things, and is the final absorber of all things. All the higher attributes which he ascribes to Tao may be predicated with equal fitness to God. VON STRAUSS, in his work on the *Tao-tê-king*, points out this fact with great clearness, quoting a large number of the passages in which he shows that the only legitimate rendering of the character "Tao" must be "God." He thus concludes his view of Lao-tsz :—"How can any one with the foregoing evidence have the slightest doubt of Lao-tsz having possessed in a remarkable degree a great and deep consciousness of God of so sublime and precise a nature that it almost realizes the idea of God belonging to Revelation, though it is needless to remark that the latter greatly surpasses it in the profundity and fulness of its manifestations. But in all the centuries preceding the Christian era no similar revelation was made beyond the one made to Israel."

**The nature of his teachings.**—The philosophy of Lao-tsz is eminently an ethical system. All of his teachings aim at making man a better individual, and a better member of society. In all his

discourses there is generally a moral allusion or a moral lesson taught in allegory. The high value he assigns to moral excellence over all showy accomplishments deserves our greatest commendation. He appeals more to the heart than to the mind. But his system is purely speculative. He does not gather facts, or question nature, or rise from particulars to generals, or in any way follow the spirit of inductive philosophy of modern times. On the contrary, he starts with a universal cause and then comes down to particular facts, framing hypotheses about nature and morals, and then trying to make existing circumstances conform to them. All of Lao-tsz's teachings are imbued with a genial and sympathetic spirit. Modesty, gentleness, forbearance, and self-denial are his constant watchwords. He utterly abhors the idea of violence, and the ostentation of superiority. According to his views, society was originally pure because the people knew God. The world has therefore only to retrace its steps and know God, and all will be well. All human effort outside of this knowledge he regarded as worthless. The principle he seems always to have had at heart and endeavoured in so many ways to enforce, resolves itself into the simple precept:—"Believe in God and act in accordance with his laws." Yet when we come to enquire as to his teachings with respect to these laws we find he is exceedingly vague, advising his followers to imitate the silent processes of nature, letting things take their chance and work themselves right, rather than interfere and perhaps make them worse.

## 6. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TEACHINGS OF LAO-TSZ AND CONFUCIUS.

**Mutual friendliness.**—It is generally supposed that Lao-tsz and Confucius were not on good terms with each other, and taught doctrines diametrically opposite. This, however, is not strictly correct. There is no evidence to prove that any other than friendly relations existed between them, especially as Confucius appears to have imbibed many of his tenets. The influence that this teaching exerted on the mind of Confucius, and the amount of similarity between the doctrines of the two are subjects which well deserve careful consideration. Orthodox Confucian scholars would of course shrink from the task of comparison, and hence it has scarcely ever been attempted by them. It may not prove unprofitable, therefore, to enquire what features of resemblance exist between the teachings of the two sages on such subjects as speculative physics, politics and ethics.

**Resemblances in speculative physics.**—We find they both agree on the emanation of the whole visible universe and man from an eternal existence, at once material and immaterial. What the one calls the “Great Extreme” the other calls the *Tao*. In the appendix to the *Yih-king* the active and passive elements called the *Yang* and the *Yin*, or what is antecedent to external forms, is also called *Tao*. The doctrines of dualism, and of the contraries producing each other are common to both systems. Again, we find that Confucius and Lao-tsz both teach that the operations of nature or God are carried on without show of effort, silently and gently. Furthermore, there are many similar forms of expression, such as the fivefold classification of tastes and colours, and as the sea with the great rivers, ruling all tributary streams.

**In politics.**—In the matter of politics more resemblances are found. Confucius abstained to a great extent from official life on account of the prevailing corruptions, and so to a greater extent did Lao-tsz. Both say that the ruler must first correct himself and his family and then he can easily reform the wicked among his subjects. Both are opposed to the principle of capital punishment for crimes, while they teach the divine right of kings, and the duty of submission to them. Light taxes, few legal restrictions and generous kind treatment are strongly and equally recommended by both.

**In ethics.**—In the department of ethics both philosophers place virtue above wisdom; both condemn specious and flattering words, as well as too much talking; both recommend gentleness, yielding, and abstinence from litigation; both are bitterly opposed to the mere show and consciousness of being virtuous; both place the superior or God-like man on the highest point of created eminence, and even rank him with Heaven and earth in forming a Trinity, acting in concert in the affairs of the Universe; both represent the dealings of Heaven as impartial, and show that violence and excess cannot permanently endure; both look back to the ancient kings and sages as exemplars of wisdom and virtue; both call for self-denial and inward purity; both seem to ignore any state of existence after death. In the Confucian classics the points of resemblance with the ethical teaching of Lao-tsz are very numerous.

**Points of dissimilarity.**—There are many points of dissimilarity, which are equally deserving of notice, between the two systems of teaching. For instance, Lao-tsz recommends that injury should be recompensed with kindness. This Confucius distinctly objects to by saying, How then shall kindness be recompensed? Confucius never got

beyond the negative form of the golden rule, while Lao-tsz took the positive or Christian side. The two types of mind are different. Lao-tsz is chiefly synthetic, while Confucius is analytic in tendency. Lao-tsz likes to sum up particular virtues and excellencies, referring them to an all-embracing idea. Confucius shows how one great principle branches off and becomes separated into many secondary principles and finally permeates all things. The one is a philosopher at home while the other is a schoolmaster abroad. This reminds one somewhat of Plato and Aristotle.

## Part V.

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### DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT CONDITION OF TAOISM.

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#### 1. CAUSES OF DEVELOPMENT.

The philosopher Lao-tsz had not the slightest intention of founding a religious sect or establishing a national religion. His was only a school of philosophy, and his followers were simply students who sat at his feet accepting his system of doctrine. His life, retiring and inconspicuous, left no such mark on the Chinese character as that of Confucius, who was always in public and ever seeking to regulate the outer life. His thoughts were as alien to the average Chinese mind as those of Confucius were in accord with it. While Confucius satisfied every one who was proud of his country and its ancient kings, Lao-tsz was only welcomed by those who were discontented with the whole state of society. How then has Taoism become a great system or miscellaneous collection of beliefs and practices constituting a very widely prevalent religion, having an enormous hold upon the inhabitants of China and her dependencies, and even still maintaining a footing in Japan? The answer is that in developing it gradually adapted itself to popular beliefs and created new superstitions. The latitude allowed by the vagueness of Lao-tsz's writings enabled and encouraged his so-called disciples and adherents to graft upon the leading ideas of his text an entirely adventitious code of physical and natural philosophy. This, on the one hand, expanded into a system of

religious belief what was only a travesty of Buddhism, and, on the other, developed into a school of mysticism, founded apparently upon the early secrets of the professions of healing and divination, from whence it rose to occult researches in the art of transmuting metals into gold and ensuring immortality or entrance into the ranks of the Genii. To all these professions and pretensions the title of the religion or teachings of Taoism was given, although they were in reality in no wise countenanced by the doctrines of Lao-tsz himself.

## 2. THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF LIEH-TSZ.

Lieh-tsz, a follower of Lao-tsz, lived in the 5th Century B.C., or the age immediately succeeding Confucius. His writings form a small collection of historical and philosophical disquisitions strongly tinged with allegory and flights of fancy. He introduced magical marvels, and preached a philosophy, not of self-depreciation, humility and frugality as Lao-tsz did, but rather of selfish enjoyment and entire absence of anxiety. He fostered belief in all sorts of magical possibilities, dealing largely in fairy tales, depicting people walking on the water without sinking, surrounded by fire and not burning, cut with knives without being hurt. He travestied Lao-tsz's teaching about the possible union of mankind with the Great Spirit of the Universe and, by the union, becoming superior to the laws of nature. So much did Lieh-tsz adapt his teaching to popular ignorance and the desire for wonders that it was readily accepted, especially as it countenanced sensual and selfish enjoyments. Some Chinese critics suppose that Lieh-tsz is but another name for Chwang-tsz, and although plausible theories are brought forward there seems but little reason to credit the supposition.

**The classic of Fulness and Emptiness.**—Some of his writings, however, approach in their tone and character towards the lofty teaching of the *Tao-tê-king*; for example, in his "Classic of Fulness and Emptiness" occurs the following passage :—

- "There is a life that is uncreated ;
- "There is a Transformer who is changeless ;
- "That uncreated one alone can produce life,
- "That changeless one alone can evolve change,
- "That life cannot but produce,
- "That transformer cannot but transform.

“The uncreated stands, as it were, alone ;  
 “The changeless comes and goes ;  
 “Its duration can have no end ;  
 “Peerless and One, it is past our finding out.”

These expressions of a writer of over 2,000 years ago agree in a wonderful way with the productions of some of our recent philosophical writers of the west.

### 3. THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF CHWANG-TSZ.

Chwang-tsz, who lived about the time of Mencius, B.C. 330, kept closer to Lao-tsz in his views, but was strongly opposed to the Confucianists. He was a native of the state of Liang, and had held an official post, but refused all offers of advancement. He preached the vanity of all human effort, disliking all attempts to become benevolent and virtuous, as well as ceaseless endeavours to observe the rules of propriety. In fact, he went so far as to say that the very attempts people were making to establish benevolence and virtue by diligent works were really producing contrary and injurious effects. He ranked scholars and sages with mean men, all greedy after some selfish object and equally undeserving of praise. He professed to doubt the reality of personal existence, and considered everything to be a mere series of phantasms. For instance, he says he once dreamed he was a butterfly, and was not for a long time after he awoke quite sure whether he was still not a butterfly dreaming he was Chwang-tsz. His views gave a marked direction to the early school of Taoist philosophers. His writings rose to high repute under the patronage of one of the Emperors of the 8th century. Various translations have been made from his works, which contain over 100,000 characters, from which we give the following characteristic extract :—

*The perfect man.*—“The perfect man is like a spirit. Were the ocean  
 “to be scorched up he would not be hot. Were the milky way to be fast  
 “frozen he would not feel cold. Of thunder which rives mountains, of wind  
 “that lashes the sea he is not afraid, and thus, charioted on the clouds of  
 “heaven or riding on the sun and moon, he journeys beyond the limits of  
 “mortality. Exempt from the changes of life and death how much more  
 “is he beyond the reach of physical injury. The perfect man can walk  
 “under water without difficulty ; he can touch fire without being burnt.”

*Inference.*—Chwang-tsz and Hui-tsz had strolled on to the bridge over the Hao, when the former observed :—“See how the minnows  
 “are darting about ! That is the pleasure of fishes.” “You not being



“yourself a fish,” said Hui-tsz, “how can you possibly know in what the pleasure of fishes consists?” “And you not being I,” retorted Chwang-tsz, “how can you know that I do not know?” “That I not being you do not know what you know,” replied Hui-tsz, “is identical with my argument that you not being a fish cannot know in what the pleasure of fishes consists.” “Let us go back to your original question,” said Chwang-tsz. “You ask me how I know in what consists the pleasure of fishes. Well, I know that I am enjoying myself over the Hao, and from that I infer that the fishes are enjoying themselves in it.”

**Legendary anecdotes.**—Various legendary anecdotes are preserved, showing the caustic wit and cynical disposition of Chwang-tsz, which were manifested even in his dying moments, when he forbade his relatives to weep for so slight a matter as the taking leave of life. He forbade them to inter his corpse saying :—“I will have Heaven and earth for my tomb—the sun and moon shall be the insignia where I lie in state, and all creation shall be the mourners at my funeral.” When his relatives remonstrated, saying that the birds of the air would tear his corpse, he replied :—“What matters it? Above there are the birds of the air, and below there are the worms and ants; if you rob one to feed the other, what injustice is there done?”

#### 4. THE TRANSMUTATION OF BASER METALS INTO GOLD.

About the year 130 B.C., the physician of the 5th Emperor of the Han Dynasty laid before his master a proposal to continue the search for the fabled fairy-land or land of the immortals which had been going on for many years under the direction of the Taoists, who made the emperors their dupes. Combined with these attempts, he suggested experiments with mercury and other ingredients to try and find the way to make gold out of the inferior metals, and to compound the pill of immortality. This is the first genuine reference to alchemy in Chinese history. The oldest work professing to give the methods for transmuting the inferior metals into gold has a formula which will show how absurd were the numberless attempts made in this direction. It says :—“Take several hundred ounces of gold or silver, adding red-lead and cinnabar, together with metallic lead and mercury; put them in a crucible with steady fire, keeping up the heat for 49 days, when they will amalgamate. Dipping out with a ladle and rolling the molten material on a tray, it will form itself into globules. One of

“these globules put either into molten lead or mercury will transmute the whole mass into pure gold or silver; but after 500 years it loses its virtue and returns to the original state, to the great loss of the owner at that time.” This professes to be a real philosopher’s stone. Many other equally absurd formulæ are given. The two great objects kept in view were to remedy the two great evils of poverty and death, by supplying gold and ensuring immortality.

## 5. THE PILL OR ELIXIR OF IMMORTALITY.

The first work giving a systematic account of the Taoist method of “refining the pill” was written in the second century by Wei-Peh-yang, and is called the *Ts’an-tung-chi* or “Trinity reduced to Unity.” It is written in rhyme, and is quite as scientific as some of our nursery rhymes. A specimen, translated from the original, is as follows:—

- “The crescent moon in the furnace,
- “The white tiger in the alembic,
- “The mercury of the sun running off in pearly drops,
- “The green-dragon combining with it,
- “Bringing the East and the West together,
- “The soul and spirit also uniting,
- “The number of the crescent moon is eight,
- “That of the decrecent moon is also eight,
- “The essence of the two combining,
- “The body of the two diagrams denoting heaven and earth is completed,
- “The two eights make up one catty,
- “The Tao of the *Yi-king* is correct and faileth not.”

Thousands of volumes have been written by Taoists on this subject. After plodding through a variety of works, ancient and modern,—not with the hope of finding the philosopher’s stone and the elixir, but to gain some idea of the highly figurative language used,—the result is an intense pity for the miserable devotees who study these books in the hope of finding out eternal life. After reading about lead and mercury, the five elements, the raven in the sun, the hare in the moon, etc., you are told there is a spiritual lead and a spiritual mercury: but how to get and how to use these spiritual metals, which they claim are the only real metals, no directions are given. The whole is a most fanciful jumble of the 3 A.’s, *viz.*, Arithmetic, Astrology and Alchemy, without a shadow of sense or meaning. One Taoist of great note, named Hwai-

nan-tsz, is said to have succeeded in making a pill which enabled him and all his family, including cattle and poultry, to ascend to heaven in broad daylight. If the pill is of inferior quality the process of transformation is slower, so that the would-be immortal has to wait till the pill gradually takes effect.

## 6. THE TAOIST POPES.

**Chang-tao-ling.**—The first Taoist pope was Chang-tao-ling, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era. He devoted himself to study and meditation, steadfastly refusing all official employment, and retired to the mountain fastnesses of Western China, where he persevered in the study of alchemy and in cultivating the virtues of purity and mental abstraction. He met a spirit who told him that in the Pe-sung mountain there was a store-house in which were the writings of the three Emperors, and a liturgical book. He found them and going through the course of discipline prescribed, was soon able to fly about in the air, to hear distant sounds, and to leave his body for intervals of time. After a thousand days of severe discipline and instruction from a goddess, he was able to walk about among the stars, and then proceeded to fight with the king of demons, to divide mountains and seas, and to command the wind and the thunder. In a mystic treatise, supernaturally received from Lao-tsz himself, he learned how to compound the grand elixir of life. In his later years he went to the Sung Hu-shan or Dragon-Tiger Mountain in Kiangsi, and at the age of 123, having swallowed the grand elixir, he ascended to the heavens to enjoy the bliss of immortality, leaving his secrets to his son, Chang-heng.

**The succession of Taoist Popes.**—In A.D. 432 one of the descendants of Chang-tao-ling was proclaimed by the emperor as the "Tien-shih" or Heavenly-Preceptor. Ever since that time there has been a Taoist pope living at the Dragon-Tiger Mountain, controlling the interests of the Taoist religion, wielding a vermilion pencil, and superintending the great and highly profitable business of exorcism. He often travels about the country, with a view to the improvement of his treasury and the condition of his co-religionists. It is said that the succession is perpetuated by the transmigration of the soul of each Pope on his decease to the body of some young infant or youthful member of the family, whose heirship is supernaturally revealed. This is evidently copied from the Buddhist practice in determining the

successor to the office of Dalai Lama in Thibet. Whatever doubts there may be about St. Peter's Apostolic successors, the present Taoist pope, Chang the 60th, boasts of an unbroken hereditary line for three score generations. He is called the chief of the "true men," and wields immense power. The scenery around his palace on the Dragon-Tiger Mountain is most enchanting. Priests come to him from the various cities and temples to receive promotion, and he invests them with titles and presents them with seals of office. There are three orders, resembling our bishops, priests and deacons. His office is fourfold. 1.—He is the head of a priestly army of over 100,000 men. 2.—He controls the invisible hosts of demons, and can punish them by shutting them up in jars. He has a wonderful old sword, handed down from his ancestors in the Han Dynasty of which the demons are all mortally afraid. 3.—He can appoint new gods and remove old ones. 4.—He gives an audience or reception to all the gods on the first day of each month.

## 7. THE TAOIST GODS.

**Gods in common.**—The three religions of China in their modern forms are so much interwoven that it is impossible entirely to separate the gods that belong to each one. The distinctive features of all three religions are clearly marked, but in the matter of gods it is found that they have many in common. The same Chinaman can be said to belong to all three religions and to worship a selection from the gods of each without any great inconsistency. The Confucianists are the literary class, but they will worship in Buddhist temples and use the Taoist liturgy or *vice versa*. China is perhaps the only country in the world where three systems differing so radically could stand side by side without one expelling or superseding the other. Many of the gods, though identical in all three systems, have different names. For instance, the Confucianists call the god generally known as the God of War, "Military Sage," the Buddhists call him the "God of Perfection," and the Taoists call him the "Minister of Heaven." Both Buddhists and Taoists have a purgatory with ten kings and ten departments, which are depicted in exactly the same ghastly way in the temples of either religion. The three religions are not equally distributed over the country. Confucianism is mostly the religion of the scholars and aristocracy. In Central China Buddhism has more influence than in the north, where Taoism has the greater hold.

**The Taoist pantheon.**—The Taoist pantheon is almost without limit, because new gods are appointed as occasion seems to require. They belong to two main classes, deified powers of nature and deified men. Their images or pictures are to be found all over China.

In imitation of the honour paid to Buddha, Lao-tsz was deified and is now one of the trinity of the "Three Pure Ones," whose images are to be seen in the most prominent position in all Taoist temples. The highest god of the present day is Yü-Hwang Shang-Ti, the creator and preserver of the Universe. Next is Wen-chang, the god of literature, and the third in rank is Lao-tsz. Coming downwards, there is a god for every one of the phenomena of nature. Of these, the chief is the god of thunder who traverses the heavens with his seven drums and his thunder-bolts, while his wife, the goddess of lightning, follows him, carrying a large mirror in each hand from which she flashes light at his command. Then there are gods of the stars, of the planets, of the hills, streams and oceans. Medical divinities are without number. There are gods of the different trades and professions, gods of the virtues and vices, gods of the family, gods of the city, gods of the animals, birds, fishes and insects. Each part of the body has its special god, there being 25 of the more important ones. Each disease has its god, 64 of whom are specially noted. In addition to these are the genii or immortals, of whom the principal ones are eight in number. These can appear in human form and disappear whenever they please. The priests are supposed to be on the most intimate terms with these gods so as to be able to protect people during life against all their evil influences and against those of demons by prayers, charms and incantations, while after death they get them easily passed through the sufferings of purgatory into the state of the highest happiness. Hence the popularity of the priests and the numbers in which they are found all over China.

## 8. THE TAOIST BOOKS.

**Canonical Books.**—Modern Taoism is comparatively well supplied with literature, such as it is. Besides the works of Taoist philosophers already mentioned, there are many canonical books and others bearing on Taoist methods, alchemy and kindred subjects, as well as some which have a more or less ethical character. The most complete canonical work is the *Tao-tsang-Chwen-shu*, which is divided into two parts, the mystical and the magical canons. Each part has its five *king* and four books, like the Confucian classics. Most of the canons of later periods are filled with the grossest superstition and most repulsive

idolatry. The *Yih-king* or "Book of Changes" forms the connecting link between the two systems, being equally used and venerated by both.

**Ethical Books.**—Among the ethical books there are four highly popular ones, which are all we have time to notice. First is the old book named "*Kan-ying-pien*" or "Book of rewards and punishments." This has been called the Bible of the Taoists. It consists mainly of about 200 precepts as to good and bad conduct, pointing out their certain results. It is in such a form that Chinese of all religions can accept its precepts. It asserts that there are no special doors for calamity or blessing, but that these things come in answer to our own call, recompenses following good and evil actions just as the shadow follows the substance. With full notes, comments and illustrations it forms a large work. Next is the ancient tract called *Yin-chi-wen* or "Book of Secret Blessings," which, though bearing no reference to the special doctrines of the Taoists, relates exclusively to moral questions. It contained originally only 541 words, and is widely distributed by those who wish to obtain the merit of doing good to their fellow-men. But costly editions are published full of comments, examples, illustrations and pictures. Its ethical influence cannot be other than good, for its precepts are of the highest quality. Its general principle is the necessity of purifying the heart, and of exhibiting the law of loving-kindness at all times and under all circumstances. The third is "*An-shih-t'ing*," or "Lamp for a Dark Dwelling." It is based on the same principle as the former two, and contains short anecdotes illustrating every one of its precepts. Each of these books, though widely known and circulated even among Buddhists and Confucianists, seems to be ignored in the actual life of the average Chinaman, in the same way that the teachings of Christ are ignored by multitudes among ourselves. The fourth work is the "*Yü-li*" or "Divine Panorama," which in many points bears a most striking analogy to DANTE'S "Inferno." It describes the ten departments of Hell or Purgatory, each of which is ruled by a separate king, and particularises, with the most careful detail, the tortures that the spirits of the wicked dead have to undergo for long periods until the evils of their lives have been sufficiently punished, restitution made, and they are ready to be born again into the world as insects, fishes, reptiles, birds, animals, or even as women or men in low positions. The good when they die merely see these places, being speedily passed from one department to another without suffering, and soon are born again into the world as men in rich and prosperous families. These ideas have all been largely borrowed from Buddhism.

## 9. GENERAL VIEW OF TAOISM.

Ancient Taoism was an effort to check despotism by an appeal to the laws of nature, while Confucianism sought the same end by an appeal to the example of supposed ancient rulers, fixing etiquette even to the minutest details. Hence, though one in principle, the systems differed, Taoism involving liberalism while Confucianism involved conservatism. Taoist teaching caused the only great revolution by which China was ever convulsed, *viz.*, that of the Emperor Tsin-shü, who tried to destroy the Confucian books.

The great object of modern Taoism seems to be to avoid as far as possible all the evils and sufferings of life both real and imaginary, while training the body and spirit for that immortal existence into which after much labour and difficulty it is possible to enter without the necessity of dying. Taoism thus appeals to the lower wants of the people, and invents divinities to promote their physical well-being. Hence the gods of riches, of longevity, of war, and of diseases all belong to this religion. Lao-tsz's pure and spiritual sayings have been taken in their grossest sense by modern Taoists, and utterly perverted by them. He spoke of longevity as the result of a calm and philosophic life, but his degenerate followers sought for long life in ways some of which are shameful to relate. Yet though his doctrines have been so greatly corrupted, the greatness of Lao-tsz has not diminished. The modern philosophical writers of the West are in many things fast approaching him, and giving out as new ideas what were known and recorded two thousand years ago. Take, for instance, an article on criticism that appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for September 1890, in which the writer says :—

“Yes, the contemplative life, the life that has for its aim not *doing* but *being*, and not *being*, merely, but *becoming*, that is what the critical spirit may give us. The gods lived thus . . . . . We, too, might live like them, and set ourselves to witness with appropriate emotion the varied scenes that man and nature afford. We might make ourselves spiritual by detaching ourselves from action and becoming perfect by the rejection of energy. . . . . From the high tower of thought we can look out at the world.”

Surely there is but little to distinguish this and many similar ideas of the present day from the principle promulgated by the venerable historiographer of the Imperial Court of Chow !

On the other hand, modern Taoism is the most abject form of demonolatry that can be well conceived. The words of CARLYLE with

reference to ancient "Paganism" may well be quoted in this connection: "Surely it seems a very strange looking thing, this Taoism, almost "inconceivable to us in these days. A bewildering, inextricable jungle of "delusions, confusions, falsehoods and absurdities covering the whole field "of life! A thing that fills us with astonishment, almost, if it were "possible, with incredulity, for truly it is not easy to understand that sane "men could ever calmly, with their eyes open, believe and live by such a "set of doctrines."

It is clear that the Taoist religion must fall before the advance of commerce and Western science. Unless something is done to instil correct principles of thought and life before the fall comes, the helpless millions of China must lapse into a state of scepticism with regard to religion and morality which must lead to confusion, anarchy and untold misery, for the teachings of history all tend to show that such a result is inevitable. We must now bid farewell to Lao-tsz and his system. The study of his work and his life, and the fortunes of his doctrines is not without great interest and instruction. He undoubtedly deserves an eminent place in the history of philosophy, and in the history of the benefactors of humanity.







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